Journal of Information Literacy
Volume 18 Issue 2
ISSN 1750-5968

Project Report

The early development of information literacy instruction for young people as revealed by six volumes

http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/18.2.647

Andrew Shenton
Former EPQ Mentor, Whitley Bay High School. Email: ashenton1@outlook.com.

Abstract

This paper uses six books to investigate the early history of information literacy (IL) teaching to school-aged young people in the UK. The work was inspired by Neil MacGregor's Radio Four programme, *A History of the World in 100 Objects,* which explored humankind's development via a series of artefacts. In my project, the items were chosen with a view to demonstrating the diverse ways in which information skills were promoted up to the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1989. All the texts selected offer ideas that could directly improve the independent learning of young people; documents that are less practical, such as reviews of the state of the field at the time, lie outside the project's scope. Although attention is mainly concentrated on the volumes themselves, the profiles of the six works are supported with references to literature that includes other books, reports, articles in professional periodicals and academic papers. My piece concludes by isolating the themes with regard to IL that emerge overall, and looks ahead to some of the changes that would take place in the immediate years to come.

Keywords
enquiry-based learning; independent learning; information literacy; school libraries; student research; user education

1. Introduction

Few factual radio programmes in the twenty-first century have enjoyed the profile and acclaim given to Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. Kennedy (2010) goes so far as to describe it as "a broadcasting phenomenon", and Henscher (2010) wonders whether "there has ever been a more exciting, more unfailing interesting radio series". Conceptually, *A History of the World* sought to trace the story of civilisations through the objects that have survived and are available for scrutiny. MacGregor (2010) explains how its scope covered the beginning of human history up to the present day; the objects were drawn from the entire world; they related

Shenton. 2024. The early development of information literacy instruction as revealed by six volumes. Journal of Information Literacy, 18(1), pp. 108–121.
http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/18.2.647

to as many aspects of human experience as possible and were selected to shed light on all strata of a society, not only the rich and powerful within it. At the heart of the thinking underpinning the programme is the process of induction – we can learn about more general matters (in this case the lives of people and events at the time) from instances of the particular (here individual artefacts). Inductive analysis is well established in the world of research in the social sciences, as investigators seek to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question via specific pieces of qualitative data and identify themes that embrace multiple cases (see for example, Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In recent months, I have undertaken my own project inspired by *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. I explored the early development of information literacy (IL) instruction for young people in the UK via studies of six books. As in MacGregor's series, I prioritised diversity. I was interested in both young children and teenagers, and the items I selected showed the different ways in which information skills were encouraged during the period in question. Some were illuminating in taking an unusual, perhaps even unique, stance on the subject; others were more indicative of mainstream thinking of the time. The first and fourth items were chosen for inclusion because of their importance, both at the time and for many years subsequently. The second and third show two different library-oriented approaches to teaching information skills. The fifth presents a contrasting, project-oriented strategy of a kind that remains popular today. The final work is perhaps the most unusual in dealing with how information and inquiry skills can be cultivated far beyond the confines of the classroom and the school library.

Although the first and the fourth texts featured were to prove highly influential, the remaining four generally made much less impact. A search of *Google Scholar* undertaken in late August 2024 revealed that none of the four appears to have attracted more than a handful of citations. We cannot assume, however, that such a search uncovers all instances in which an item has been referenced and, on a more fundamental level, frequency of citation does not equate unequivocally to degree of use. Wilson (1996) notes how practitioners rarely write papers that cite academic research, and it may fairly be said that both information professionals and teachers involved in promoting IL in their own schools seldom produce published work of the kind where sources that have been consulted are expected to be rigorously recorded.

The decision was taken to concentrate on the period up to the arrival of the National Curriculum which was introduced in phases in schools in England and Wales from September 1989 onwards. It was a landmark in the teaching of information skills and provided a significant break with the past. The National Curriculum presented, for the first time, a comprehensive, structured and statutory programme relating to the teaching of knowledge, skills and understanding for adoption in different subjects and different school phases. It is an indication of the extent of the changes in educational practice induced by the National Curriculum that the Library Association (1991) was prompted to produce a guidance document showing how, in the contexts of the key subjects of Mathematics, Science, English and Technology, the investigative and information skills of young people from 5 to 16 years of age would now be progressively developed in relation to:

- "planning";
- "locating and gathering";
- "selecting and appraising";
- "organising and recording";
- "communicating and realising";

- "evaluating".

For the purposes of this paper, "information literacy" is believed to refer to the ideas and abilities associated with success in finding, evaluating and using evidence that informs the individual. The stance taken with regard to the nature of information adheres to the notion of "information-as-thing" discussed by Buckland (1991). The material may be sought for such diverse reasons as, for example, solving life problems, satisfying one's curiosity, acting on a leisure interest or fulfilling academic obligations. The definition of IL adopted here is deliberately broad because my own experience as a teacher and school librarian tells me that when young people involve themselves in "finding out", they may pursue any available material which informs them; they do not limit themselves to the kinds of literature that we have traditionally associated with information science. The diversity of the contents of the six texts featured here reflects this wide-ranging perspective.

The profiles that follow deal primarily with the importance of the six items and the material within them. This information is accompanied by insights from additional sources, such as other books, reports, articles in professional periodicals and academic papers. Although few of these directly cite any of the six texts, they do help to place them in a proper context, either with respect to related developments/thinking at the time in terms of IL or more general themes that were evident over a longer period.

2. The six texts

2.1 *Effective Study* by F.P. Robinson (Harper & Brothers, 1946)

Although the term "information literacy" is usually attributed to Zurkowski (1974), I have argued elsewhere that significant work in relation to the concepts we frequently associate with the words predate his report (Shenton, 2023). The ideas of some very early writers are still helpful in tackling today's information challenges. For example, many of Thouless's thoughts on "crooked thinking" and fallacious arguments that originate from the 1930s (in Thouless, 1930) continue to be relevant now when we engage with text in order to evaluate it. His observations on spotting dishonesty in writing can be aligned with the kind of "reflective reading" that Paterson (1981) maintains should be applied when "selecting and using information" (p. 8). Nevertheless, it is difficult to find any books even from the following decade, i.e. the 1940s, that offer specific IL tools which remain in widespread use. In this respect, Robinson's *Effective Study* is unusual.

The author covers much diverse ground in his textbook, notably practice associated with examinations, writing skills, mathematical ability and health and social factors impinging on study. In terms of the modern-day IL agenda, Robinson's work owes its longevity largely to a discussion of one particular strategy for working with a non-fiction source, namely SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review). The exact nature of the instructions to the reader and the headings associated with these have undergone countless revisions and modifications in the hands of others over the years. In the early 1980s, Tabberer and Allman (1983) noted that the fourth element was then generally understood to be that of "recall", rather than "recite" (p. 62). Today, many universities – especially in North America – have added a further element and so renamed the model SQ**4**R (see, for example, University of Regina, 2023; University of Guelph, 2024). At this early stage, Robinson terms his first version the "Survey Q3R" method.

Notwithstanding all the subsequent changes, the essentials of the framework have remained largely intact over nearly eighty years and have been used in a multitude of contexts that we can associate with IL. For example, in addressing library and book skills for school librarians, Coles, Shepherd and White (1982), refer to it as an "established method" when discussing "detailed and critical reading" (p. 201), whilst Paterson (1981) highlights its value in his "information skills checklist" as a strategy for retaining information. SQ3R is also integral to the advice on reading that writers such as Hamblin (1981) and Freeman (1982) offer when presenting their study skills courses. It is striking how many aspects of what we would today regard as IL were featured in the study skills programmes of yesteryear. The elements deemed by Tabberer and Allman (1983) to be typical ingredients of such courses include reading strategies (such as SQ3R), library use, note-taking, preparing/writing essays and understanding/preparing tables and diagrams.

Robinson's original SQ3R can be summarised as follows:

- **Survey** – give special attention to headings and chapter summaries in order to orientate yourself in relation to the ideas you will read about in full.
- **Question** – convert headings into questions that will stimulate your interest and comprehension.
- **Read** – actively search for answers to your questions.
- **Recite** – after reading a section, generate an answer to the relevant question, without looking at the text. Phrase it in your own words.
- **Review** – check the notes that you have made, explore the relationships between the main points and see what you can recall from your memory.

Later writers have developed strategies that can complement Robinson's ideas. Russell (1979), for example, advises scrutinising various components of a book when forming an overview of the work as a whole. His higher order suggestions can easily operate in concert with and immediately before executing the survey phase within SQ3R, in which Robinson's emphasis lies on the material within individual chapters.

2.2 *How to Use a Library* by Doris Rushton (Peter Daffon Associates, 1980)

Effective Study is a highly library-oriented book in that the author clearly intends that the reading matter to be subjected to the SQ3R approach will have been borrowed from such an organisation. In acknowledging some of the practicalities of studying before outlining SQ3R, he refers specifically to "the difficulties of getting to the library" (Robinson, 1946, p. 13). Rushton's book contrasts with Robinson's text, not only in targeting young children and their teachers whilst he is clearly addressing adult scholars, but also in concentrating much more directly on the exploitation of the library itself, through instruction on tools such as the classification scheme and the catalogue. There is some overlap with Robinson's territory in that Rushton, too, is concerned with how best individual items can be used, but this is generally in terms of the parts of a book and the special characteristics of individual types of material. Unlike Robinson, Rushton does not advocate a particular approach to reading.

Over time, many teachers and school librarians during the period in question doubtless became aware of certain problems that frequently affected their students when they used the school library. In looking to provide additional support, such adults may well have been tempted to introduce tools inspired by the ideas of other writers. One can imagine, for example, school librarians augmenting the activities Rushton suggests with guides within the library environment,

like a flowchart based on that designed by Stagg and Brew (1977) for “finding the book you want”.

Viewed in its entirety, Rushton’s content reflects to a large extent the scope of many user education programmes applied in school libraries during the 1970s and 1980s. These aimed to demystify what Kuhlthau (2004) terms the “bibliographic paradigm” in accordance with which libraries operate and, by familiarising students with the conventions and arrangements within the library (p. 1), equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to exploit the collection. Rushton’s content is heavily paper-oriented, and non-book material – here believed to embrace “films, records, slides, tapes, maps, charts, posters and study kits” (1980, p. 92) – is allocated no more than a solitary page.

Any teacher contemplating drawing on the volume with their own students may well choose to package the most relevant parts in a single programme dedicated to books and the school library. This method was widely criticised, however – both in the 1970s and 1980s and more recently. Lincoln (1987) identifies the biggest problem: if information, library or study skills are taught in isolation, there is a danger that youngsters will see the content as “out on a limb and [it] is rarely transferred to the main core of their studies in subject areas” (p. 8). McKee (1982) highlights a particular “gap in perception” among older students in the 1980s (p. 12); they may be taught skills in “library lessons” in their first three years of secondary school but fail to see their relevance to the project work they undertake in the fourth and fifth years for CSE Mode III courses. Mallett (2007) considers the “decontextualised exercises” that accompany bibliographic instruction to be “dull” (p. 22), whilst Williams (2006) argues that the use of sessions which cover information skills without an appropriate subject focus overcomplicates the situation. The stance of Vakkari (1997) is pertinent, also. He notes that information is merely one element in the completion of a task or action, and finding it is subordinate to the wider process in which it is embedded. Young people whose priority may be simply to complete their assignments for school will not have the same perspective on information as a librarian or their teacher and they may struggle to see why it merits the importance bestowed on it within dedicated lessons.

Any reader seeking to arrange Rushton’s activities in an integrated user education programme may have looked for guidance to “case study” accounts in which writers of the time explained how they had prepared and delivered a structured set of “library lessons” successfully in their own school. These may provide a lead that inspires a reader of Rushton’s volume to create a comparable programme. At secondary level, Hamilton (1977) describes her work in this regard with a cohort of eleven-year-olds, in a sequence embracing the autumn, spring and summer terms, whilst Lindsay (1976) recounts how the information skills of students of different ages up to and including the Sixth Form have been developed systematically in his comprehensive school. Another model is offered by Trigg (1981), who broadly suggests that “locational skills” associated with the library and its contents can be covered with the two youngest year groups in a secondary school, and more demanding “evaluation skills” are addressed with the next two – older – year groups (pp. 303, 304).

2.3 *Library Alive* by Gwen Gawith (A.C. Black, 1987)

Ostensibly, *Library Alive* would seem to cover much the same ground as Rushton’s work. There are, however, significant differences. Whereas the previous book is almost exclusively concerned with encouraging skills associated with the school library and the items within it, this

volume deals more widely with how the facility can be used by teachers to promote a range of activities, some of which may feature a creative element not typically associated with traditional user education, such as story writing. Moreover, whereas the means by which Rushton's material will be put into practice is left entirely to the teacher, Gawith includes a structured programme. It suggests an order in which certain of the activities may be introduced for primary-aged children ranging from five to thirteen. Nevertheless, she recommends that they should be selected individually, rather than slavishly adopted in an inflexible sequence. Gawith also indicates that the proposed tasks are designed to complement and supplement other classroom-based reading/research work. Her attitude allows scope for a hybrid strategy with the ideas here delivered in concert with project study whereby information skills are applied within subject assignments. The need for such a two-dimensional strategy is emphasised in the Bullock Report. It asserts that, when providing opportunities for young people to locate and handle books, "contrived" scenarios (such as those that figure in many aspects of user education) should be immediately balanced by activities that serve "a useful purpose" (Department of Education and Science, 1975, p. 119). Superficially similar in combining features of two separate strategies, Gawith's stance nonetheless differs from the halfway house model advocated by White and Coles (1980). They retain the exercises and worksheets element characteristic of conventional user education but situate information skills teaching firmly within the delivery of the Science curriculum and the study of various topics within it.

Although after the arrival of the National Curriculum readers would have to ensure that the suggestions Gawith offers for scheduling the activities were consistent with the statutory stipulations, many of the individual teaching ideas could still be adopted today. Gawith groups them as follows on the basis of their foci:

- who – the user;
- what – the library and its materials (fiction and non-fiction);
- research, drawing on different materials and relating to a range of subjects;
- authoring, with children writing and creating books for themselves.

The reference in the first bullet point to the youngster's own situation is understandable; I have indicated elsewhere, in a student research context, that the developmental state of the young child means that they are better equipped to deal with information directly relevant to themselves, those known to them and their immediate environment than with abstract issues (Shenton, 2015). On a more esoteric level, library skills, Gawith maintains, can be categorised in terms of four divisions:

- **locational**, involving the ability to navigate around the library environment;
- **alphabetical**, with an emphasis on exploiting tools such as indexes, working with dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and finding individual fiction volumes on the library shelves;
- **numerical**, so as to make effective use of the Dewey system;
- **research**, encompassing retrieving items, recording details of sources, reading in different ways and note-making/understanding.

Much of what Gawith proposes here is consistent with the recommendations of Kuhlthau (1988) which emerged from direct research. Any educator who was familiar with Kuhlthau's paper on how library media programmes can be informed by a knowledge of the information needs that emerge in youngsters at certain stages in their development might look to combine ideas from the two works.

2.4 Information *Skills in the Secondary Curriculum* edited by Michael Marland (Methuen, 1981)

Although frequently credited solely to Marland, this report was actually a collaborative enterprise; it puts forward the recommendations of a working group sponsored by the British Library and the Schools Council, albeit under Marland's chairmanship. The aim of the project was to provide schools with practical advice on the teaching of information skills. Despite being separated from Robinson's book by some thirty-five years and more obviously directed at teachers of young people, Marland's volume is comparable in that it owes much of its longstanding popularity to one particular creation within it – an "information skills curriculum".

This seminal structure marked the beginning of a shift away from the restricted fields of user education and bibliographic instruction that had hitherto dominated to a more information-oriented, problem-solving perspective. For many commentators, this is where modern IL guidance truly began. Writing in the mid-1990s, Herring (1996) asserted, the "starting point for most information skills work in the UK remains the nine-step plan identified by Marland's group in 1981" (p. 19), whilst at much the same time Rogers (1994) reflected: "It provided a major impetus to thinking about and the development of information skills in schools. For more than a decade, it has been the key reference point for researchers, teachers and librarians interested in this aspect of the curriculum" (p. vii).

Marland's framework offered a structured set of skills that the educator should look to inculcate and gave the student a series of questions to ask and stages to work through when planning and completing an assignment. The outline was among the first to highlight for secondary school teachers many of the skills that are integral to modern concepts of IL, notably those involving the evaluation of material that has been retrieved and arrange these systematically. Marland also puts forward a modified version of SQ3R when presenting the reading skills necessary for interrogating resources.

It is perhaps significant that Marland's background was that of a headteacher and educationalist; he does not assume that all student independent learning will necessarily take place in a library environment and with paper materials. In listing the likely resources for use, he makes reference to models, specimens, museum exhibits and "people with specialist knowledge or experience", as well as such typical library items as textbooks, periodicals and newspapers (1981, p. 32). It is the broad scope and wide-ranging utility that made Marland's framework so invaluable. As he notes in introducing his sequence of stages, they are "inherent in any finding-out activity" (1981, p. 30).

2.5 *Working Alone: The Child's Guide to Independent Study* by Peter Congdon (Gifted Children's Information Centre, 1978)

The weaknesses of context-free information skills teaching sessions were raised in discussion of Doris Rushton's book above. Congdon takes an alternative, project-based approach. This affords the advantage of the student seeing the skills in terms of "real" assignments rather than "artificial" exercises and, as White and Coles (1980) recognise, where information skills are taught through the study of a particular subject, a clear sense of purpose is injected. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks. Whysall (1987) points to how project-based work would seem better equipped to give youngsters practice in the application of information skills than to

deliver actual teaching. Still, for Wisher (1977), “learning by doing” – which is a feature of project work – is more effective than any instructional programme (p. 115). In pre-Internet days, there were challenges in resourcing projects (with respect to depth and diversity of suitable material), especially in situations like that advocated by Congdon where children were invited to choose their own subjects or where aspects of an assigned topic were selected by the youngsters for scrutiny. As Joyce and Joyce (1970) appreciate, “truly learner-centered inquiry takes students in all directions” (p. 10); the needs of individuals and the forms of support they will require may be difficult to forecast at the outset.

Congdon’s description of his approach differs from Marland’s *information skills curriculum* in that it is presented as a narrative embracing possible methods when tackling projects on crime and dogs. Although both writers offer chronological sequences, Marland’s more abstract perspective can easily be applied step-by-step in a range of situations. If an educator sought to deploy Congdon’s advice with a class, the burden would fall squarely on their shoulders to derive from his text a series of generic stages. I have shown elsewhere (see Shenton, 2014) that this could take a form such as:

a) Define the topic.
b) Formulate a key question.
c) Devise a series of subservient questions.
d) Identify appropriate information sources; do not restrict yourself to the obvious possibilities.
e) Exploit the available finding aids, such as contents lists and indexes in books.
f) Gather information, making notes where necessary.
g) Prepare the end product, constructing it as you collect your information.

Congdon was one of several writers in the 1970s to highlight the wide range of information-seeking options available. In terms of organisations alone, Wood and Russell (1979) identify “reference libraries, museums, art galleries, craft centres, and other local sources of first-hand information” (p. 13). Congdon himself cites the child’s personal knowledge, books and other paper materials, interviews with experts, museums, talks by relevant professionals and information from appropriate organisations. However, whereas Marland and Wood and Russell see libraries as integral elements within the youngster’s “information world”, in Congdon’s booklet they go unmentioned.

2.6 Looking *and Finding* by Geoffrey Grigson (Phoenix House, 1958)

We might assume that virtually all IL instruction before the advent of online or computer-based training was delivered in-person by a teacher, school/public librarian or parent. Yet, this is to ignore the value of “finding out” books for children and young people, and it is easy to imagine someone of primary school age receiving this item as a gift on their birthday or for Christmas from a well-meaning adult. Parallels can be drawn between *Looking and Finding* and Congdon’s guide in that both are intended as much to stimulate ideas and enthusiasm for the inquiry process as they are to instruct in investigation. Moreover, each is meant for direct use by the child; no intermediary is strictly necessary to connect the youngster with what is being proposed, although Congdon believes that in his case it is advisable.

Much of *Looking and Finding* advocates first-hand exploration on the child’s part. From an IL perspective, the material of most relevance to us is the coverage of libraries, bookshops and museums. The youngster is also directed to maps of various kinds, some general reference

sources, like the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and specialist texts that encourage follow-up reading in relation to the subjects under discussion. The volume concludes with advice on how particular books of interest may be acquired.

Grigson's work won considerable acclaim, with Wood and Russell (1979) going so far as to say it was "hard to find a better book" that would serve as an introduction to research for children of around eight years of age (p. 13). Nevertheless, Hawkins (1959), in a contemporary review, was much less enthusiastic, criticising its sudden changes of direction and repetition in its advice. The text is certainly eclectic, with suggestions on collecting and even developing one's own museum sitting rather uneasily alongside material on finding out about the history of one's own house, some of the surrounding buildings and the local area. The wide-ranging scope of the book is reflected in the somewhat catch-all full title – *Looking and Finding: And Collecting and Reading and Investigating and Much Else*. Grigson's work goes unmentioned by Paterson (1981) when he recommends "finding out" books for use by children; he opts instead for the later volumes by Manly and Rée (1978) and Fergus (1979). Both deal with the exploitation of organisations such as libraries and individual types of sources. Nevertheless, some youngsters' urge to discover was indisputably stimulated by Grigson. Trubshaw (2005) recalls with obvious fondness the impression *Looking and Finding* made on him after receiving the book as a present at the age of ten, and muses on how many other adults of a comparable age to himself were similarly inspired by Grigson's work in their formative years.

3. Limitations of the study

The project whose results have been outlined in this paper was restricted to scrutiny of books. It should be acknowledged that many educators would also have gained insights from professional periodicals, notably the *School Librarian*, and in the years immediately prior to the arrival of the National Curriculum, the impact of computer software was starting to be felt, thus marking a shift in the medium being used to deliver at least some IL instruction. For example, in 1984, *Information Skills*, a suite of programs by Akersoft for the BBC machines, enabled children of primary school age to show their recognition of parts of a keyboard, practise their alphabetical ordering abilities, develop their independent information-finding methods and increase their familiarity with data handling and the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme.

This paper has concentrated on material purposely intended to aid student inquiry. Scholarly items which reviewed the state of the field at the time, such as works by Winkworth (1977) and Heeks (1989), were considered beyond the scope of the project. It should be appreciated, also, that the approach taken here was better equipped to uncover the thinking of contemporary writers on IL than in revealing the actuality of what was happening at a widespread level in UK classrooms and school libraries with regard to skills teaching.

In sum, the six books featured deal with tools (Robinson's SQ3R), library-oriented programmes (those of Rushton and Gawith), strategies for teaching/learning inquiry characterised by a clear sequence of steps (Marland's information skills curriculum and Congdon's project-based outline) and individual ideas and activities (those offered by Grigson). Other writers who were putting forward similar thoughts around the same time have either gone unmentioned or received much less attention here. Among them are Paterson (1981), whose "checklist of information skills" was contemporaneous with Marland's report and comparable in the model it presented. Wray (1985), meanwhile, was setting down his own vision of a project-based method. The vogue for study skills programmes in the 1970s and 1980s saw various tools deployed in secondary

schools to encourage scholarly reading and, although it is SQ3R that has endured, Tabberer and Allman (1983) also highlight in this context the OPIR (Overview, Preview, Inview and Review) model – a technique that has been championed, too, by Buzan (1974).

4. Final thoughts

Examination of the six texts that were consulted for this paper revealed a range of elements that we today associate with IL. These are embedded in a variety of approaches – bibliographic instruction, user education, the structured teaching of information skills more widely, guidance on independent study and practical suggestions for inquiry within the home and the environment beyond. The importance attached to the library varies from one document to another; in some instances, it is fundamental whilst in others there is no explicit reference to it at all. The authors' underlying purposes differ, as well. In most cases, the focus lies on developing skills that are integral to educational success; elsewhere the aim lies in stimulating the fun of finding out. Nevertheless, it may be said that in the course of seeking information in recreational situations and to satisfy their curiosities, youngsters may acquire skills that will also serve them well in academic contexts. Jansen (2019) points to research that "indicates a strong relationship between leisure reading and school achievement" (p. 357), so adding weight to the longstanding observation made by Waples et al. (1940) that there is a commonality of elements in recreation and education. Despite the differences in emphases that are apparent in the six items under scrutiny here, it would have been perfectly possible for an eclectic educator to take inspiration from several and incorporate ideas, tools and activities originating in separate places so as to construct a hybrid and unique strategy for teaching IL in their own situation.

The time period covered by this paper was one of flux in library and information science (LIS) and education, especially with regard to shifting attitudes in terms of what constituted "good practice" in fostering information skills, the growing involvement of information technology and the rising profile of independent learning assignments. As the Library Association (1988) recognised, in the new GCSE examination system, course work was assuming "a new significance". It would take various forms, require the use of different types of materials and be assessed in a way that would contribute to the candidate's final grade. There would be further changes in the immediate years ahead, with the introduction of the National Curriculum, the "Literacy Hour" initiative in primary schools, innovations in IT that would see the emergence of CD-ROM, email and the World Wide Web, and growing interest in IL as an area of professional and academic research/investigation.

Declarations

Ethics approval

Ethical review was not considered necessary.

Funding

Not applicable.

AI-generated content

No AI tools were used.

References

Akersoft. (1984). *Information skills*. [Computer program].

Buckland, M. K. (1991). Information as thing. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *42*(5), 351–360.

Buzan, T. (1974). *Use your head*. BBC.

Coles, M. H., Shepherd, C. A., & White. C. (1982). The science of library and book skills. *School Librarian*, *30*(2), 200–207.

Congdon, P. (1978). *Working alone: The child's guide to independent study*. Gifted Children's Information Centre.

Department of Education and Science. (1975). *A language for life*. HMSO.

Fergus, A. (1979). *Finding out from books*. Hulton.

Freeman, R. (1982). *Mastering study skills*. Macmillan.

Gawith, G. (1987). *Library alive*. A.C. Black.

Grigson, G. (1958). *Looking and Finding*. Phoenix House.

Hamblin, D. H. (1981). *Teaching study skills*. Basil Blackwell.

Hamilton. L. (1977). Suggestions for secondary school library lessons. *School Librarian*, *25*(3), 217–220.

Hawkins. T. H. (1959). Review of: Looking and Finding. *Nature*, 183, 1557.

Heeks, P. (1989). *Perspectives on a partnership: Information skills and school libraries 1983-1988*. British Library Research and Development Department.

Henscher, P. (2010). The objects of my affection. *Independent*, 15 October.

Herring, J. (1996). *Teaching information skills in schools*. Library Association.

Jansen, A. (2019). Increasing leisure reading among university students using e-readers with audio. *College and Research Libraries*, *80*(3), 356–365.

Joyce, B. R., & Joyce, E. A. (1970). The creation of information systems for children. *Interchange*, *1*(2), 1–12.

Kennedy, K. (2010, October 14). Radio 4's A History of the World in 100 Objects draws to a close. *The Guardian*.

Kuhlthau, C. C. (1988). Meeting the information needs of children and young adults: Basing library media programs on developmental states. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, *2*(1), 51–57.

Kuhlthau, C. C. (2004). *Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information services*, (2nd ed.). Libraries Unlimited.

Library Association. (1988). *General certificate of secondary education: Guidance note on the role of libraries and librarians*, (2nd ed.). Library Association.

Library Association. (1991). *National curriculum and learning skills*. Library Association.

Lincoln, P. (1987). *The learning school*. British Library Research and Development Department.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lindsay. J. (1976). Information training in secondary schools. *Education Libraries Bulletin*, *19*(3), 16–21.

MacGregor, N. (2010). *A history of the world in 100 objects*. Allen Lane.

Mallett, M. (2007). *Active encounters: Inspiring young readers and writers of non-fiction 4–11*. United Kingdom Literacy Association.

Manly, D., & Rée, P. (1978). *Finding out*: *The young reader's guide to facts and where to find them*. Piccolo.

Marland, M. (Ed.). (1981). *Information skills in the secondary curriculum*. Methuen.

McKee, B. (1982). The social role of the school library. *Education Libraries Bulletin*, *25*(3), 12–19.

Paterson, E. C. (1981). *Information skills 8 to 18*. Hull College of Higher Education.

Robinson, F.P. (1946). *Effective study*. Harper & Brothers.

Rogers, R. (Ed.). (1994). *Teaching information skills: A review of the research and its impact on education*. Bowker-Saur.

Rushton, D. (1980). *How to use a library*. Peter Daffon Associates.

Russell, P, (1979). *The brain book*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Shenton, A. K. (2014). Babies and bathwater, and failing to use our memory bank in the teaching of information literacy. *School Librarian*, *62*(2), 79–80.

Shenton, A. K. (2015). Children as researchers: Where should they start? *Primary First*, *14*, 30–34.

Shenton, A. K. (2023). Information literacy: Did Alvin Toffler beat Paul Zurkowski to it? *Journal of Information Literacy*, *17*(2), 150–156.

Stagg, S., & Brew, S. (1977). Finding the book you want: An algorithm. *School Librarian*, *25*(3), 221–222.

Tabberer, R., & Allman, J. (1983). *Introducing study skills: An appraisal of initiatives at 16+*. NFER-Nelson.

Thouless, R. H. (1930). *Straight and crooked thinking*. English Universities Press.

Trigg, S. (1981). The use of the library. *School Librarian*, *29*(4), 302–306.

Trubshaw, B. (2005). *Sacred places: Prehistory and popular imagination*. Heart of Albion Press.

University of Guelph. (2024). *Study effectively*.

University of Regina. (2023). *SPARK: SQ4R reading strategy*.

Vakkari, P. (1997). Information seeking in context: A challenging metatheory. In P. Vakkari, R. Savolainen & B. Dervin (Eds.), *Information seeking in context* (pp. 451–64). Taylor Graham.

Waples, D., Berelson, B., & Bradshaw, F. R. (1940). *What reading does to people: A summary of evidence on the social effects of reading and a statement of problems for research*. University of Chicago Press.

White, C., & Coles, M. (1980). Libraries and laboratories. *School Librarian*, *28*(3), 237–242.

Whysall, R. (1987). Reading for information in the primary school. *Reading*, *21*(3), 169–177.

Williams, P. (2006). Against information literacy. *Library and Information Update*, *5*(7–8), 20.

Wilson, T. D. (1996). Monitoring and evaluating information-related research. *Education for Information*, *14*(2), 85–93.

Winkworth, F. V. (1977). *User education in schools: A survey of the literature on education for library and information use in schools*. British Library Research and Development Department.

Wisher, P. (1977). Basic library skills: A choice of learning media. *Journal of Educational Television and Other Media, 3*(4), 114–116.

Wood, A., & Russell, J. (1979). *Children and books*. Home and School Council.

Wray, D. (1985). *Teaching information skills through project work*. Hodder and Stoughton.

Zurkowski, P. G. (1974). *The Information service environment: Relationships and priorities*, related paper number five. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, ERIC document ED 100 391.