Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc Library and Information Management at Dublin Business School

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Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Declaration

I, Beth Whitney, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: Beth Whitney

Date: 1st August 2016
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover Sheet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Significance of the Study / Rationale</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Recipients for Identified Research</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Theoretical Perspective</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Justification</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Summary</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Information Literacy; An Introduction</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Information Literacy; The Global Perspective</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Information Literacy; Europe</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Information Literacy; Ireland</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Evolution of IL to Skillset</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

2.5 Association with 3rd level
2.6 Information Literacy: The Skill Gap
2.7 Frameworks
2.8 IL Competencies
2.9 IL for Trainee Teachers
2.10 Competencies in Accreditation Criteria
2.11 Focus on Other Literacies
2.11.1 Media Literacy
2.11.2 Health/ eHealth
2.11.3 Technology and Digital Literacy
2.11.4 Metaliteracies
2.11.5 Lifelong Learning
2.12 Education
2.13 Who Teaches IL to Teachers?
2.14 CPD for Teachers
2.15 School Curricula
2.16 Lack of Programme/ Framework
2.17 Role of Librarians in Education Delivery
2.18 IL in School
2.19 Summary
3.0 Methods
3.1 Introduction
3.2 Purpose Statement
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Research Question</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Hypotheses</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Research Strategy</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Research Philosophy</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Research Design</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Setting</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Technology</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 Rote learning</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11 Teacher training</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12 Population Sample</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.1 Sampling Librarians</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.2 Sampling Teachers</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13 Data Collection</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14 Mapping Data</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15 Interview Data</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.16 Interview Instrument and Protocol</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.17 Focus Group Data</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.18 Focus Group Instrument and Protocol</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.19 Academic Literary Sources</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.20 Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.21 Data Analysis Strategy</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.22 Suitability of Researcher</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23 Time, Cost, Project Management</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.24 Limitations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25 Summary</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Presentation of Findings</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Mapping Exercise</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Primary Level English</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Primary Level Science</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Junior Certificate Level English</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Junior Certificate Level Science</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.5 Leaving Certificate Level English</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.6 Leaving Certificate Level Biology</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Interview Findings</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Interview Findings Regarding Trainee Teachers</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Interview Findings Regarding IL levels of Trainee Teachers</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4 Interview Findings Regarding Librarians Opinions on the IL levels of Professional Teachers</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.5 Interview Findings Regarding the Librarians Opinions Irish Education Policy</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.6 Interview Findings; A Summary of the Themes</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Focus Group Findings</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Focus Group Findings Regarding Teachers and IL</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Focus Group Findings Regarding the Curriculum and Assessment</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 Focus Group Findings Regarding Policy</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4 Focus Group Findings; A Summary of the Themes</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Conclusion of Findings</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Discussion and Conclusions</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Hypotheses 1 Addressed: IL competencies, as described by the SCONUL, ANZIL and ACRL Frameworks, are not present in the Irish Education Curricula and Syllabuses.  

5.3 Hypotheses 2 Addressed: During their initial and subsequent training, teachers are not made aware of the IL skillset. 

5.3 Hypotheses 3 Addressed: Teachers and students would benefit from a government, or other national, initiative backing IL awareness 

5.4 IL in Irish Schools; A Closer Look 

5.5 Role of Librarians in Education Delivery to Irish Students 

5.6 Lack of Programme/ Framework 

5.7 School Curricula and IL 

5.8 IL and CPD for Teachers 

5.9 Irish Education System 

5.10 IL Instruction of Trainee Teachers 

5.11 Lifelong Learning in the Irish Education System 

5.12 Focus on other Literacies in the Irish Education System 

5.13 Technology & Digital Literacy 

5.14 IL Competencies in the Curricula 

5.15 IL and Irish Professional Teachers 

5.16 IL Competencies and Teacher Comprehension 

5.17 Utilisation of the Frameworks 

5.18 IL Skill Gap 

5.19 Preparation for 3rd level 

5.20 Summary 

5.3.1 Recommendations for Teachers
### 5.3.2 Recommendations for Policy

#### 6.0 Personal Reflection

#### 6.1 Rationale for Undertaking MSc

#### 6.2 Discussion of Skills Development

#### 6.3 Knowledge and Skills Acquired During the Dissertation Process

#### 6.3.1 Secondary Research Process

#### 6.3.2 Primary Research Process

#### 6.3.3 Dissertation Formulation

#### 6.4 Learning Style

#### 6.5 Career Plan
List of Figures

Figure i; Quote from "The Library as an Educational Factor",
The Elementary School Teacher, vol. 5. 9

Figure ii; CILIP carrying out a survey re a new definition for IL 18

Figure iii; www.therightinformation.org The Scottish IL Framework 24

Figure iv; taken from http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Continuing-Professional-Development 36

Figure v; Illustration of Cosán Values and Principles 38

Figure vi; Sectoral Representation (O’Brien & Russell, 2012). 41

Figure vii; Conversation from Primary School Focus Group 68

Figure viii; Primary Group re Policy 70

List of Tables

Table 1; American teacher training -v- Irish 81
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

**Abbreviations**

ALA; American Library Association

BA; Bachelor of Arts

CILIP; Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

IL; Information Literacy

IST; Information Skills Training

LAI; Library Association of Ireland

LILAC; Librarian’s Information Literacy Conference

MAP; Maynooth University Access Programme

MSc; Master of Science

OPAC; Online Public Access Catalogue

SCONUL; Society of College, National and University Libraries

SLARI; School Library Association in the Republic of Ireland

TFIL; Task Force on Information Literacy (in the LAI)

UK; United Kingdom

USA; United States of America
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Abstract

This dissertation has created an illustration of the extent to which IL infiltrates the Irish education system. In a threefold investigation a mapping exercise was carried out, librarians in the two main teacher training colleges were interviewed and two focus groups were held; one consisting of primary school teachers and one of secondary. The results demonstrated that all of the IL competencies, as defined by ACRL, SCONUL and ANZIL, are found within the Irish curricula. The librarians in the national teacher training colleges expressed a need for an upgrade in IL training for trainee teachers and a need for a tailored framework, equivalent to the Welsh system. The teachers themselves, during the focus groups, directed to the conclusions that primary school teachers would be willing to incorporate IL into their lessons, provided the resources were available. The secondary school teachers expressed a need for a formal IL grading system to create enthusiasm for the concept. Both groups displayed ignorance to some aspects of IL. The conclusion of this project is that political support is required if teachers are to become fully aware of IL and incorporate it into their teaching. Currently there an absence of leadership in this area, creating a student body ill-equipped for third level education on entry.
1. Introduction

Formal education is a defining aspect of our social construct. The curiosity of the human condition and our desire to gather and organise seem to be evolutionary traits. The library as an ‘incubator of ideas’ (Leousis & Sproull, 2016) is central to this premise. In the advancement of the modern library there have been some momentous steps, such as the printing press and the digital revolution. However, some advances seem to be somewhat slower in reaching their maturity. As remarked by Ahern (1905), more than one hundred years ago, an academic awareness existed of a need for a learning style beyond that of the text book.

We did not know, and we did not know that we did not know, that libraries are potent factors in education. But today teachers are awakening to that fact, and all around us we see evidences of a new effort and a realization of Dr. Thurber's words:

It is now pedagogic high treason, indeed, to act as if textbooks contained the whole canon of knowledge, and for the teacher to explain everything in advance, and then to expect of the class only to say back what has just been said to them, is to reduce teaching to the lowest depths of imbecility.

Figure i; Quote from "The Library as an Educational Factor", The Elementary School Teacher, vol. 5.

The first mainstream description of the term Information Literacy (IL) was produced by the ALA in 1989. This document emphasises the role of IL in the quality of life;

“[In] an information society all people should have the right to information which can enhance their lives....

To reap such benefits, people as individuals and as a nation, must be information literate. To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”

Unfortunately, IL has not been established as a mainstream term. In 2003 IL received recognition at a European level with the publication of The Prague Declaration "TOWARDS AN INFORMATION LITERATE SOCIETY". Yet still, the phrase struggles to infiltrate popular language in Ireland. The governmental aims set out by “Moving Towards a National Skills Strategy by 2020” skirts many of
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

the aspects of IL but fails to use the term. In the Irish schooling system, would students benefit from IL tuition or is a traditional, text book based, subject segregated system serving their best interests?
1.1 Statement of the Problem

Once the bare necessities have been provided for, IL is uniquely important in the provision of quality of life: McClelland (2003) remarked on the importance of IL in society and that there is a strong correlation, from as young as 22 months of age, between socioeconomic status and a child’s literacy accomplishment in the UK. For this reason, IL skills should be taught from as early on as is possible. With reference to Dr Thurber’s musings in Ahern (1905) the author debates whether the Irish school curriculum, reliant on textbooks, is reduced ‘to the lowest depths of imbecility’? This project will delve into the opinions of teachers and academic librarians (facilitating teacher training) to explore whether teachers are aware of the term IL and to attempt to address whether there is a presence of IL skills listed in the outcome of school curricula that teachers are delivering. If IL competencies are embedded within the syllabus that teachers are delivering, and if teachers are unable to identify the skill-set, it would imply a failure at some point in teacher training?
1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain a snapshot of the Irish education system with emphasis on the IL skillset. To what extent are IL competencies based in the Irish Curriculum and to what extent are teachers enabled to impart this skillset to their students to enable them towards the aim of self-directed lifelong learning?
1.4 Significance of the Study / Rationale

Among students, the IL skill gap has been identified at many levels; Dubicki (2013) reflects on the gap between the actual IL skills that students display versus the level of IL expected by teachers in higher level education in New Jersey, USA. More locally, under the remit of MAP, Maynooth University Access Programme, librarians from the university have delivered IL skills courses to second level students. This was as a response to anecdotal (but widely accepted) evidence of a gap in the IL skills in students moving from second level education to third. In an IL study carried out in Northern Ireland, an over-estimation of skills and misplaced confidence was uncovered in second level students (McKeever, 2013); furthermore, teachers’ IL awareness was identified as a further line of research. This is one aspect of the purpose of this project are teachers aware of the defined IL skillset?

In order to provide scope, it will be imperative to firstly measure the presence of IL skills in the Irish school curriculum. This exercise has never been carried out before, for that reason a template provided by Bradley (2013) will be used. In a similar exercise, IL competencies within university programmes were mapped to selected professions accreditation documents. To recreate this scheme in the context of IL skills and the Irish curriculum will provide a useful, unique basis on which to build the subsequent hypothesis (referred to above).

It is hoped that the root of the skill gap at higher levels could be identified and suggestions made to bridge it. It is also anticipated that the data collated during this project could provide the basis for a further, comprehensive, national review.
1.5 Recipients for Identified Research

It is intended that this document will be of significance to a number of parties; an internal and external examiner will receive the document for critical valuation. Furthermore, the parties from whom primary data will be collected will all be offered a copy of the complete dissertation, including raw data. It is expected that the findings will be of interest to both library and information professionals as well as members of the teaching profession and that collaboration between the two will be encouraged.

The author plans to delve into the possibility of publication of the material gathered, as both IL and education are popular topics and this document should provide some unique perspective. If the author were to speculate ambitiously, it would be anticipated that the findings of this MSc would form the basis for a longitudinal qualitative PhD which could lead to the evolution of policy governing the current structure of the Irish primary education system.
1.6 Theoretical Perspective

To define the remit of the theoretical perspective of this study, it is required to incorporate more than one of the frames as outlined by Crossman (2016). From the Macro versus Micro perspective, it is hoped that this project, carried out on a micro scale will be comparative to that of the situation of society from the bigger-picture perception, therefore having aspects of both macro and micro theoretical perspectives. For the initial mapping exercise, a scientific approach will be taken and therefore this relates quite closely to Realism; “there is a reality quite independent of the mind” (Saunders et.al., 2007). As the initial basis for the qualitative study is laid, then theories of interpretivism will come into play. It is when the opinions of librarians and teachers are sought that the laws of logic and scientific theory may wholly not apply. By carrying out this mixed-methods approach within the perspectives listed will imply the use of both deduction (initially) followed by some induction (secondly). This is quite an acceptable form of research as they are not “mutually exclusive” (Gray, 2004), in fact the author believes that by providing the scientific reasoning to the participants of the study will provide clout and more in-depth meaning when drawing conclusions.
1.7 Justification

There is a broad spectrum of studies on IL in the literature, but there is no comprehensive study into the IL skills of young Irish students; Soloman (1993) specifically looked at ‘Children's Information Retrieval Behaviour’, although this was with the aim of examining the usability of an OPAC system. Fasick (2000) makes reference to the reasons for poor rates of reading literacy in developing countries, but it is unclear whether these factors are relevant in an Irish context:

“Inadequate preparation of teachers has been suggested as a reason for failure in each of these cases. An emphasis on rote learning and a tendency to teach for testing rather than for learning has been blamed”.

Irish teachers are, of course, well prepared, but perhaps it can be illustrated that there is room for improvement in the framework of IL.

There are currently several recognised definitions for IL; at the time of writing (23/06/16) the author received a request from CILIP on the topic; they are aiming to update their organisational definition of IL to incorporate the progress that has been made in the scope of the term (refer to Figure ii below). Many other ‘literacies’ have been identified in the literature and will be discussed in depth here.

Finally, the strongest justification for carrying out this project is the future generation; in an environment of the “google generation”, “digital natives”, and the “knowledge economy” has information literacy been dominated in popular media by the term digital literacy (DL)? Can a digitally literate student function in society without the full spectrum of IL competencies? Librarians think not, but popular media has failed to note this. This project aims to highlight this skillset as the most essential feature of a young graduate at any level. After all an information literate student is empowered to turn their hand to any subject.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Figure ii; CILIP carrying out a survey re a new definition for IL
1.8 Summary

IL is the basis of most services provided by the academic library, comparatively, education is the foundation of modern society. The author will be setting out to define the relationship between these two and to assess the extent of the juxtaposition. A mixed methods approach will be used; initially, to map out IL competencies within the curriculum, secondly librarians will be interviewed in the two major teaching training colleges in Ireland. This will allow assessment of the extent of IL tuition teachers receive. Finally, teachers themselves will be subject to observation in focus groups that will be designed to encourage incisive discussion, it is envisaged that the teachers will reflect that of what the librarians have set out. This project’s three-pronged approach will provide strength when drawing conclusions. Preceding the investigatory content, a thorough literature review will set the environment in which this project is placed.

Chapter one has introduced the topic of this project, chapter two will be an exploration of the literature in the area of IL and will create a juxtaposition between it and education. Chapter three will provide the methodology utilised for the primary research component of this project. The findings will be presented in chapter four and chapter five will contain the discussion which will conclude with some recommendations that were indicative on analysing the results.
2.0 Information Literacy; An Introduction

IL instruction delivery in academic libraries has had many forms, from synchronous to asynchronous, from standalone to embedded, and it is no surprise that this is where the term was coined. In 1989 Patricia Breivick published the first definition of IL; ever since, there has been debate, further definitions and frameworks published associated with the term. This lack of a concise definition may be the crux of the reason why the term has not infiltrated popular expression? The scope of the term remains open for debate, whether IL is the umbrella term that encapsulates the metaliteracies (Jacobson & Mackey, 2013), digital literacies and all forms of information behaviours, or whether IL is a branch on the tree of literacy itself, equal to other literacies, but not all encompassing. For the purposes of this dissertation IL will be considered the umbrella term, encompassing all other defined literacies. It is the opinion of the author that digital literacy falls within the ‘find’ element of IL.

The frameworks associated with IL will be described in detail later in this chapter. Initially and for the purposes of clarity, the most commonly used definitions of IL used are;

The ALA;

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

SCONUL;

“Information Literacy is an umbrella term which encompasses concepts such as digital, visual and media literacies, academic literacy, information handling, information skills, data curation and data management.”

ACRIL;

A set of abilities requiring individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”
2.1 Information Literacy; The Global Perspective

IL studies are being conducted in education institutions with Malaysian teachers (Halida et al., 2016), in the South African Classroom: (Zinn et al., 2016), and all throughout the African continent (Baro, 2011), in India (Singh, 2010), Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (Bradley, 2013). It is the opinion of Kutner & Armstrong (2012) that in the global, digital context IL misses the mark when it comes to “content-based engagement with the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of information access, retrieval, use, and creation”. We shall return to this stance on reflection of the IL frameworks.
2.2 Information Literacy; Europe

EnIL; the European network on Information Literacy is a network that was founded in 2001. Its foundation was as a response to the lack of policy in the area, in contrast to “the USA [where] the IL goal is clearly a national policy issue since 1989”. EnIL was formed to avoid cost duplication associated with separate initiatives and to form a central policy authority to provide guidance. Its activities are mainly centred around ‘research projects related to Information Literacy, with special focus on the Higher Education context’, however this networking group seem to not have influence spread to Irish national school curricula (for more see http://enil.ceris.cnr.it/Basili/EnIL/).
2.3 Information Literacy; Ireland

Among the Irish academic and library community IL is quite a dominant topic. Dublin has twice been the host of LILAC, and for a small community, Ireland has run library and information postgraduate courses in three separate locations. The area in which this dissertation will take place has a Carnegie library, founded in 1905 (archiseek.com, 2010).

It seems that there is discourse between the perception of the importance of IL skills and their delivery; ‘IST continues to be delivered in primarily standalone format, using non-integrated methods’ (McGuinness, 2009). At second level, Irish students are not guaranteed access to an information service. In 2004 the SLARI called for a national strategy for school libraries, to replace a series of one-off grants. Their document entitled “The School Library in the 21st Century: An Agenda for Change” recognises ‘the importance of developing students’ information literacy or information handling skills’. Yet the Education Act, 1998, does not refer to school libraries, Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025 does not refer to the phrase Information Literacy and neither does the ‘Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020’. It would seem that there is a definite disconnect between Irish library professionals and their government.

It has however, been noted by our nearest neighbours in the UK that while students and teachers find it difficult to articulate the value of a school library, there are indications that there is a strong relationship between pupil engagement and IL with good library provision (Gildersleeves, 2012).
2.4 Evolution of IL to Skillset

Authorities in the area of IL, have attempted to add clarity by offering frameworks and skillsets to supplement understanding of what it means to become information literate. By defining a skillset, it allows a student to develop a more precise evaluation of one’s own capabilities in the area. It also allows for a breakdown of the components of IL. Latham & Gross (2011) utilised this format to facilitate students ‘learn at least one skill they could apply in imposed and self-generated information-seeking tasks’. It is this well-defined skillset that would facilitate a collaboration with the Irish syllabus. In Wales, an educational framework has been developed based on the SCONUL seven pillars of IL. Scotland had a similar project that preceded the Welsh one. These documents are a valuable source for school teachers. There is a need for such a document, to use as a reference point for the Irish student population.

Figure iii; www.therightinformation.org  The Scottish IL Framework
2.5 Association with 3rd level

Austin & Bhandol (2013), thoroughly explore the role of the library in third level education and the ‘legitimacy in the teacher role’. The term IL was developed in an environment of third level education. In Ireland it is not standard for schools at primary and secondary levels to provide a comprehensive library service. It is, therefore, no surprise that the majority of studies in the literature, carried out in the area of IL are based at third level. Chan (2016), most recently, established persuasive indication that student’s IL improved over the course of their third level studies using the Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA). The gap in IL skills between second and third level is referred to blow. Unfortunately, as of yet, the literature does not tell us whether proper intervention at primary and secondary levels would remedy this skill gap. The evidence so far leads to musings as to whether the Irish education system has considered what type of students it wants to produce. Is it the aim of the system to produce a well-rounded, independent lifelong learner, or is it the aim of the primary and secondary systems to produce a graduate with a grasp of the topics brought before them (which implies the tools have not been afforded for further learning)? According to the CSO, ‘third level student numbers increased by 105% between 1990/91 and 2003/04’ however there is still a substantial cohort of the student body who do not commit to third level education. In the current climate these people miss out on the life skill aspects IL instruction has to offer.
2.6 Information Literacy: The Skill Gap

The origins of the skill gap at many levels in education, is worth exploring: It has become popular in the literature to demonstrate the benefit to third level students gained by attending information literacy skills programmes. Nierenberg & Fjeldbu (2015) carried out such a demonstration for the first time in Norway on Information Literacy skills, (up until this there had been an emphasis on literature search skills). Students who attend classes with IL based assignments have a higher appreciation of IL skills (Kim & Shumaker, 2015) than those who don’t complete formal IL assessment. Using the librarians’ aptitude for communication and collaboration, embedded IL courses have been improved over the years, using student feedback and performance marking as a marker (Kavanagh, 2011). All of these third level based studies have been carried out too; initially, aid students in their transition from second level to third, but also in response to the skill gap. Students entering third level study have lower than expected IL skills, what is more perplexing is a misplaced confidence. These third level entrants perceive their seeking, gathering, understanding, assessing and critiquing to be at a much higher level than it actually is.

At second level, students will state that they can use the library catalogue system, but they don’t in practice, preferring to ‘ask a friend’ or ‘use the internet’ (McKeever, 2013). Furthermore, they are satisfied to have fulfilled an information need with unsubstantiated or incomplete information.
2.7 Frameworks

In 2004, the ANZIL Framework of IL was published; it consists of six standards of IL. Each is introduced by an explanatory sentence outlining the basic competency, followed by a description representing all dexterity that is contained within that standard. In 2011 both the ACRIL and SCONUL frameworks were published. The ACRIL framework is broken down into six frames, and the SCONUL into the seven pillars of IL. These frameworks all have a central similarity, that the primary skillset of IL is easily identified and understood, however at the periphery they hold some differences and not only in their presentation. This will be discussed further below. In an Irish context, the CONUL Advisory Committee on Information Literacy (ACIL) produced a booklet aimed at staff designing education modules at all standards. It aims to increase the awareness of the IL skillset and outlines, using case studies, how IL can be offered to students and integrated into core coursework. A summary of the three frameworks can be found in appendix 1.

It is widely accepted that Australia (the home of the ANZIL framework) are the most advanced in the area of IL delivery. Slowly the influence is being spread worldwide. In 2010, Welsh Information Literacy Project published the ‘Information Literacy Framework for Wales, Finding and using information in 21st century Wales’. This document provides IL standards in the context of each level of primary and secondary levels with reference to the SCONUL pillars. This document could be used quite directly to steer IL delivery in Ireland if it were so desired.

It is not the case that IL is unheard of in Ireland, a UCD librarian has carried out a study on baseline IL skills of entry level post graduate research students (Patterson, 2009). IL is not a topic unknown by the library community in Ireland, but it has yet to be successfully brought to the mainstream.
2.8 IL Competencies

There are some competencies common to all three frameworks; for example, all three require that a student or person can recognise a need for information, SCONUL calls this ‘identify’, ACRL incorporates this skill into the ‘Searching as Strategic Exploration’ frame and ANZIL in standard 1; “The information literate person recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information need”. This process continues with the pillars Scope, Plan, Gather, Evaluate, Manage and Present; there is consensus and all of these skills appear within ACRIL and ANZIL. There are some stand-alone skills that appear exclusively to their own framework: Frame 1 of ANZIL “Authority is Constructed and Contextual’ appears distinctly here. The other frameworks do make references to this, usually within some sort of critical evaluation, that information is created from different authorities, however ACRIL define that to recognise this is a skill in its own right. “Information Has Value” falls into this category also, in general, across the frameworks it is understood that information should be presented ethically with due consideration for the creator, but ACRIL presents this frame most explicitly. The most unique standard within the ANZIL framework is the last listed, standard 6; “The information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information”. This standard seems to aim to create a citizen of the world, to create an appreciation that information can be contextual and to hold an awareness and appreciation for value sets other than one’s own. This standard alone illustrates the importance of looking at the three frameworks as a collective, individually they provide structure to base understanding of the concept, but together they provide an overview of a skillset that can enhance learning and provide skills for life beyond formal education.
2.9 IL for Trainee Teachers

In a general search within the literature over 20,000 results are given back for the terms ‘information literacy’ and ‘teacher training’. This is a promising start. It is definitely helpful to explore what is happening worldwide in IL and education, but will this have any bearing on what is happening in an Irish context?

In the USA, teachers are required to teach with reference to evidence based methods. In an experimental group (with graduation date 2007), it was shown that collaboration between library staff and faculty has “the potential to increase the IL skills of teacher candidates” (Emmons et.al., 2009), however this does not bring us closer to the answer to our question. We have already assumed that collaboration with librarians is essential to allow teachers to raise their awareness of IL, but where in the world is it happening? In juxtaposition with ourselves, in Malaysia, IL is not a central focus in the secondary school curriculum. As most studies with teachers and IL focus on the IL skills of teachers themselves, Halida et.al (2016) set out to determine how teachers ‘conceptualise’ IL and how this effects delivery. It was found that teachers are superficially aware of competencies within the IL frameworks, however an in-depth understanding was found to be lacking. This study was carried out in an environment where the term IL is widely accepted.
2.10 Competencies in Accreditation Criteria

There are no Irish references in the literature for accreditation criteria for teachers and IL. The mapping exercise that will be carried out for this project seems to be the first project of this nature in Ireland. So, it must be asked, what can we learn from experiences beyond this island? As noted by Duke & Ward (2009), in a ‘metasynthesis’ of the literature;

“many teacher educators still do not view academic librarians as collaborative partners who can help them teach information literacy skills and research strategies to preservice and in-service teachers.”

This then, must be the starting point of an investigation; who teaches IL to the teachers? This must be established before asking questions about the IL skills of the educators.

In an American assessment of IL instruction for trainee teachers it was observed that an interest in IL skills of teachers was only observed after the topic was supported and publicised by “non-library organisations, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)”. This confirms that without government support academic librarians’ efforts are somewhat futile. Perhaps librarians’ efforts should be shifted from the immediate (and obvious) need for IL training to marketing of IL and lobbying of politicians.
2.11 Focus on Other Literacies

When Breivik coined the term IL and reconceptualised information skills delivery, the model had a much narrower connotation than it has now. While the actual skillset has not changed, the application of these skills in various contexts has emerged as different skillsets in their own rights. Historically, the term literacy became popular very recently, in the 1970’s and by the 1980’s literacy was being divided into subsections (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). In 1999 Digital Literacy was brought to us by Gilster. Up until last year, 35 different literacies have been defined in the literature (Stordy, 2015), of these, IL was cited twice as much of the next most cited literacy (DL). In the 375 citations examined by Stordy, media, health, ehealth, scientific, technological and computer literacies were among the most popular. Within academic libraries, many of the subcategories in the literacy taxonomy are taught under the guise of IL, perhaps this is the reason for the reputation of IL in the literature? For the purposes of this prose, it will be understood that IL is the original and umbrella term, into which all other literacies fall within. the correlation between socioeconomic status and literacy levels have already been referred to in this document.

2.11.1 Media Literacy; in 2009, half of the top 100 iPhone apps in the USA, were aimed at children younger than school-going age. It is important that ‘habits of inquiry’ and ‘skills of expression’ are harnessed and nurtured from a child’s first experience in education (Rogow, 2011). These skills can be taught without the use of technology itself, but by encouraging students ‘to act as critically autonomous thinkers’. It is quite daunting to think that the advertisers are successfully reaching people before the education system is and that perhaps this media literacy will need to be taught initially, before basic literacy skills. With the advances of intuitive touch screen devices, young people can access media intervention at a very young age. Resulting from collaboration between The New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative in the USA a 2008 Horizon Report found that “fluency in information, visual, and technological literacy is of vital importance, yet these literacies are not formally taught to most students” (p6). In the USA it was found that where media literacies are not taught it is because of inadequate CPD programmes being offered to teachers. At the time, media centred courses were focusing on use of media tools and supporting technology, neglecting the higher critical thinking aspects of this literacy (Baker, 2009).
2.11.2 Health/eHealth; the critical thinking aspect of IL and the access skills gained are most imperative in health literacy. Web-based health information-seeking behaviour, measured by Lee et al. (2015), uncovered that approximately half of people with chronic health issues would benefit from support when navigating through health matters on the internet. Despite this in the USA 80% of the population use the internet for this purpose. A high proportion of people have been observed to seek health information using the public library service, of this group all of the subjects in one study rated their own information finding skills excellent or good, not one ‘reported average, fair, or poor ability to find health information in public libraries’ (Yong & Yi, 2015). In Britain; an overestimation of information seeking skills, coupled with evidence for a need of support in seeking health information on the internet (Marshall et al. 2009) has been observed. The overestimation of the IL skill of seeking raises concerns for the critical eye people should adopt when they have found an apparently reliable health information source.

2.11.3 Technology and Digital Literacy; to review the definitions as outlined by Walton (2016); Digital Literacy (DL) is the ability of applying the IL competencies in a digital context. The ‘digital natives’ are quite comfortable with using and navigating most aspects of technological tools, however the deeper critical assessment aspects of DL seem to be lagging behind in the ‘technology-enabled’ environment (Brooks Kirkland, 2014). Leadership and guidance is required in this area for students, tech-savvy does not translate to information-savvy. To be fully literate in the context of information overload, a student must have well-honed searching and filtering skills to prevent getting trapped down a hole of unreliable sources. The assumed competency levels of young people in this area have led to lack of confidence among teachers. In a survey of Middle School teachers, in the USA, despite having received training and despite actually having above average use of technology in the general population, teachers still rated their digital and technological skills ‘below average’ (Purcell et al., 2013). This confidence is to be addressed in teachers, who seem to feel left behind in this ever-evolving area. To emphasise how vast, the digital information world is, the need for data literacy has been described by Fontichiaro & Oehrli, (2016). There is now an onus on students to comprehend statistics and large data in order to effectively use these is academic argument. These skills are also needed beyond the classroom, extending to ‘Personal Data Management’ and ‘Big Data and Citizen Science’.
2.11.4 Metaliteracies; As observed by Meyers (2009), millions of 4-year-old to 12 year olds are spending a significant amount of time, exploring and communicating in shared virtual environments (SVE’s). Mackey and Jacobson (2011) state that this environment of social media and online communities “requires a reframing of information literacy as a metaliteracy that supports multiple literacy types”. This is a dangerous concept; to restructure IL would inevitably mean to lose some of the traditional information skills. In an era of information overload, critical assessment and ethical presentation require more emphasis, not less. Not all literature has shifted the paradigm of IL to a lesser competency; Witek and Grettano (2014) observed metaliteracies in practice and suggested this influence pedagogical decisions; to embrace the effects of social media on students’ IL behaviours.

2.11.5 Lifelong Learning; IL skills are abilities for life, not just for academic achievement. Most of the literature on IL is based in third level education, where there is a strong library presence, the public library studies are mostly based on public library users. To achieve an IL population of lifelong, independent learners, marginalised groups need to be included. ‘Information poverty’ of urban immigrants (Shen, 2013) needs to be addressed as does the ability of seniors to access information in the digital era (Hallows, 2013) and the international gender gap in involvement with technological tools (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014). To bring this issue back to the Irish education system; the introductory document to the Primary School Curriculum expresses an aim to encourage independence in learning so that it may be continued autonomously throughout life;

“An important goal of the curriculum is to enable children to learn how to learn, and to develop an appreciation of the value and practice of lifelong learning.”

Primary School Curriculum Introduction
2.12 Education

Education has evolved hand-in-hand with the progression of civilisation and some could argue that it is the passing on of knowledge that helps propel this progress. Hedge schools are an integral story in Irish history. Currently and transnationally, non-democratic regimes assert their power by denying education. There has been a backlash to this denial of education, facilitated by international information sharing of the semantic web. Women such as Malala Yousafzai and Leyla Hussein have become advocates for both education and the living standards of global citizens. The world is a smaller place now; globalisation and neo-liberalism now exist in the framing of education. The delivery of education is structured to provide the basis for economic gain, achieve this level- gain this monetary prize (Saltman, 2009 p.43). Furthermore, recent and rapid changes in the European social norm have led to the simplification of pedagogical methods. The literature indicates a move away from hermeneutics and competencies that develop personalities towards the ‘lexical idea of knowledge’ (Hevesi, 2010). The ramifications of this simplification in the delivery of education are well documented in pieces such as Raish, & Rimland, (2016) and Dubicki, E. (2013). Employers are seeing a deficit in information literacy skills to that which they expect in highly educated people and third level educators are finding that students lack in searching, choosing and critical assessment of information as well as its presentation. These facts point clearly to the need for an exploration into the foundation of IL in the education of young students.
2.13 Who Teaches IL to Teachers?

A strong foundation of IL skills is what is needed to build academic achievement, as well as to be proficient in general life skills. The introductory document for the Primary School Curriculum recognises “The child’s sense of wonder and natural curiosity” and “The child as an active agent in his or her learning”. This document makes thirteen references to information, nine to literacy, but no allusion to the term ‘information literacy’. Perhaps this is because it is futile to teach IL without a proper base of literacy or perhaps it is because of a national ignorance to the concept. It is expected that this will be discerned via a combination of mapping IL skills to curriculum assessments, an examination of CPD topics available to school teachers and via primary research.

CPD should play a strong role in reversing the lack of self-confidence in certain areas of literacy. In an American study, it was noted that the need for CPD availability for faculty and LIS staff was only vaguely understood by the providers. Furthermore, a need for a structured support system (such as a faculty mentoring programme) was noted (Hahn & Lester, 2012), the author wishes to determine whether this is the case in an Irish context via direct conversation with members of the profession.
2.14 CPD for Teachers

Cosán; the National Framework for Teachers’ Learning is a new document, the second phase of which was published, in March 2016 after considerable consultation with the profession. This initiative is going through significant process and discussion; it is promising that such a project takes this attitude.

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Figure iv; taken from [http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Continuing-Professional-Development](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Continuing-Professional-Development)
Unfortunately, Cosán has missed the target when it comes to information literacy; the phrase is not used once on the whole website. In an illustration (below) of the key elements of Cosán in a concentric loop of principles ‘reflective practise’ is on the outside, encompassing

‘values and principles’ and

‘standards to guide teachers’

learning and reflection’.

At the centre of this illustration is the ‘learning areas’;

‘leading learning,

inclusion,

well-being,

ICT,

Literacy and Numeracy,

supporting teachers’ learning’

and on the other side, the ‘learning processes’;

‘mentoring/ coaching,

practice and collaboration,

research,

reading and professional contributions,

immersive professional activities,

courses, programmes, workshops and other’.

Time and again, with each publication in the area of education the Irish Government seem to talk around IL competencies and fail to reference the term.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Figure v; Illustration of Cosán Values and Principles
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

2.15 School Curricula

Once again, when conducting the literature search it is imperative to travel to abroad for examples of research in the area of IL and school curricula. The author regrets that any references here will be applicable to only a certain extent, as the Irish curriculum has been independently developed. For this reason, principles can be observed but not direct comparisons made. The (Irish) National Council for Curriculum and Assessment have a comprehensive website (http://www.curriculumonline.ie/); an invaluable resource for teachers. The author has failed to find the term IL anywhere on these sites. (Actually there is one instance; in a PowerPoint presentation presented by Gordon Stobart Emeritus Professor of Education, University of London.) We know from third level based studies that embedded IL courses are more effective than standalone and we know that when assignments are assigned efficacy is increased. At this point it is not possible to comment on whether IL competencies are incorporated into the schooling of Irish students, for this reason a mapping exercise will be undertaken as the cornerstone of the primary research for this project.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

2.16 Lack of Programme/ Framework; the Irish education system is working towards a vision of “responsive regulation”, blending the aid of external inspectors with that of local teachers and the community (Hislop, 2012). However, this is in the absence of a national IL framework, a definition of the terms of reference for this concept is constricting our abilities to define and measure our abilities in this area. Previous reference has been made to the absence of IL in Irish Government publications, and that support of the governing body is essential to conveyance.
2.17 Role of Librarians in Education Delivery

The Irish Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL) was founded in 2006 to review and make recommendations on IL in Ireland. They adopted the CILIP definition for clarity and they defined an integrated approach to IL as illustrated below (O’Brien & Russell, 2012). This project will define the extent to which the school buy-in has been a success. IL has had most success in the health sector (Urquhart, et.al., 2007, Andretta, 2008), where healthcare informatics is high on the agenda for medics. Communication of health issues is of critical importance and so IL is emphasised. This communication of information is central to effective teaching, it is therefore perplexing to observe the lack of authoritative support for teacher IL delivery, and currently IL education is supplied by the librarian on an extempore basis. Information provision is only a universal equaliser where information skills exist. The digital divide is one aspect to information access but it is no stretch to refer to an IL divide: In DePaul University, Chicago, a need was recognised to provide a personal finance module (Jagman et.al. 2014) and in Missouri; patterns of library location and how they related to race and income were identified by Thorne-Wallington (2013).

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Figure vi; Sectoral Representation (O’Brien & Russell, 2012).
2.18 IL in School

In an assessment of IL perceptions of instructors in a technical college, critical assessment of resources was identified as the biggest weakness among students (Sandercock, 2016). Majid et.al. (2016) have noted a similar phenomenon as was observed in Northern Ireland (McKeever, 2013): despite the fact “The Ministry of Education in Singapore has introduced aspects of IL in schools through incorporating components into the syllabi of various subjects” students were found to use their school library facilities at a very low level, favouring social media resources and peer help over that of the librarian. Students, the world over, show symptoms of ‘library anxiety’, an idiosyncrasy familiar to librarians (Gremmels, 2015) which has inspired this endeavour to assess the IL delivery in Irish schools with “the use of qualitative methods and respect for the lived experience of respondents.”

2.19 Summary

To conclude, the literature provides extensive theoretical perspective on IL, both from the library perspective and of that of the education system. The skill gap is noted time and again, as is teacher confidence in delivery of new skills in the digital realm. These factors add to a need for a specific small scale case-study on IL delivery in the Irish education system. IL has consequences for quality of life, access to services as well as implications for third level study and beyond into the workforce. If we can produce students prepared for graduate studies with an inquisitive, critical mind it will be an achievement to define a generation.
3.0 Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the process by which the primary research was carried out for this dissertation project. The rationale for the research methods will be outlined as will the limitations, ethical considerations and project management aspects.

3.2 Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this project is to establish the extent of IL competencies in the Irish school curriculum. This will be achieved via a mapping exercise, comparing three IL frameworks to both language and science subjects. This will provide the basis for the second purpose; to assess teacher IL consciousness. This will be measured in two ways; via an interview with the librarians in the two most prominent teacher training colleges and by holding focus groups, one consisting of primary school teachers and one of post-primary. The focus of this second purpose will be threefold; an assessment of teacher proficiency and IL training (a) while in college (b) when qualified and (c) under the policy of the Irish Government. The results will have implications regarding the delivery of these skills to students. The intentions will be explored via a three-pronged investigation into IL in the Irish education system.

3.3 Research Question

The research question is broken down into three sections;

- To what extent are IL competencies based in the Irish Curriculum?
- Do teachers receive IL training?
- To what extent are teachers enabled to impart this skillset to their students to enable them towards an aim of self-directed lifelong learning?

3.4 Hypotheses

1. IL competencies, as described by the SCONUL, ANZIL and ACRL Frameworks, are present in the Irish Education Curricula and Syllabuses.

2. During their initial and subsequent training, teachers are not made aware of the IL skillset.

3. Teachers and students would benefit from a government, or other national, initiative backing IL awareness
3.5 Research Strategy

The research strategy for this project is one of mixed methods. The rationale supporting this choice is “to overcome the limitations of a single design” (Biddix, 2009) and that constant findings among different data collection methods suggest legitimacy (Powell & Connaway, 2004). It was the initial aim of this project to assess teacher awareness of the concept of IL. To carry out this research, certain preliminary work was needed to be added, to give the project a basis on which to carry out the desired investigation. The quantitative data gathering exercise which mapped IL competencies to certain subjects in the Irish curriculum served two purposes. It irrefutably illustrated the extent to which IL competencies are intertwined in the Irish curriculum. This in turn gave the project concrete evidence on which to base the qualitative element. Additionally, the mapping exercise was then used to demonstrate to librarians and teachers the crux of the matter when carrying out interviews and focus groups. It became an educational tool on which to base discussion. The qualitative element of this project gathered data from experts in IL and from the teachers delivering the competencies. The results of this threefold approach to the investigation have yielded a unique and robust dataset on which a national study could be based.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

3.6 Research Philosophy

This thesis intends to gauge the extent of infiltration of IL into the primary school curriculum and the opinions of the professionals working intimately with the education system.

The research aspect of this project was divided into three sections; originally a mapping project was carried out. As an exercise had not been carried out before in an Irish context, example was sought from Bradley (2013). This piece work is not strictly speaking, primary research as the data was not generated, only compared. However, it was a worthwhile exercise as it had not been carried out before and it gave substance to the succeeding research. The quantitative data gathered aided the generation of a specific view, that of the positivist conservatory.

Following the scientific philosophy of the mapping exercise, it was decided that an interview based, qualitative approach will be taken with experts on IL and on teacher training. Librarians were contacted and interviewed to assess their stance on IL within the Irish education system. For the first time in Ireland, the mapping exercise was introduced to information professionals. This proved to provide exciting insight. The interview was chosen as the data gathering tool at this juncture as it is the most flexible tool available in primary research.

Finally, this project was host to two focus group consisting of teachers. The reason for choosing to hold focus groups over separate interviews was so that discussion could be facilitated. This will allow for delving deeply into the topic, seeking clarification and to encourage openness in an informal, comfortable setting. These two methods were executed from an interpretivist position, as described by Duignan (2016).

Local perceptions were gathered from several points of focus, in a situation which is too complex to be described by a straightforward dataset of numbers or facts, as described by Holliday (2002, p. 193). For this reason, a mixed-methods approach was utilised, an emphasis on facts gathered, followed by opinions on the phenomena illustrated. The qualitative research was gathered from both expert sources and subjects within the teaching profession.
3.7 Research Design

In 2010 the LAI’s Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL) adopted its terms of reference (see appendix 2), however a national adoption of the term or its principles has not been nationally recognised. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, ‘The National Strategy to Improve Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020’ by The Department of Education and Skills does not contain the phrase ‘information literacy’. Is this gap in the education system trickling down to our youngest students at primary level, and are the front end deliverers of education aware of IL?

This research is being carried out in a locality that is successful in education delivery and is dynamically expanding. It will not be assumed that the environment is representative of a situation endemic to the whole country; however, a strong basis for further study will be established. The subjects have been selected from different types of school settings to give a wide social aspect to the study.

This thesis will set out to establish correlation between the Irish curriculum and IL competencies, to interview librarians on IL training for teachers and to consult with teachers themselves on the findings of the previous two exercises.

Do they deliver the essence of the IL skill-set with an awareness of the principles? Is critical thinking nurtured in young students or is it seen as a skill to be gained later in academia? Is the education system supportive of the different learning styles? Do Irish primary school teachers feel supported by the national library service?

The mapping exercise was conducted using Bradley (2013) as a template to compare three IL frameworks with academic outcomes as specified to teachers by the governmental authority.

The two interviews were conducted with three subjects at two academic, third level, academic libraries. These subjects have expertise in the area of IL and are familiar with the modular components of teacher training at university level. It is thought that these subjects will add a dimension to the data that may have been missed if teachers alone were to be interviewed. The structure of these interviews can be referred to in appendix 3.

Finally, having reviewed the data already gathered, teachers were invited to attend focus groups; one of primary teachers and one of secondary. These groups were presented with an informative introductory video on IL, a brief presentation of the findings of the mapping exercise and were
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

encouraged to discuss the findings under three headings; teacher training, qualified teachers and policy. The structure of these focus group sessions can be found in appendix 8.
3.8 Setting

There are several factors to be considered in view of the environment in which this dissertation is placed; socioeconomics, technological, economic, teacher IL awareness, student family circumstances would be among the main factors. This setting for this project is subject to outside factors from the wider context such as information overload, IL policy and affairs of the state. Geographically, the area in which the focus group participants will be selected from has the biggest secondary school in the country under construction (appendix 4), the local population is diverse and expanding (appendix 5) and there is a well-established, excellent library facility in the centre of the town (appendix 6). Access to this Carnegie library service is of huge advantage to the young population in the town.

The wider environment surrounding the topic of IL will offer many themes to be explored during the data gathering process.

3.9 Technology: Irish primary schools, given the opportunity are embracing technology and facilities that allow them to teach ‘active learners’ as opposed to passive students (McInerney, 2005). The terms digital literacy and ICT have become popular where IL has not. Access to mobile technology is being used to promote lifelong learners in the adult population (Ion, 2015). Are we creating lifelong learners with the early introduction of technology to the classroom?

3.10 Rote learning: the element of surprise enhances the learning experience and so repetition can lead to boredom and inattention (Diamant-Cohen, 2004). Do teachers feel facilitated to deliver varying pedagogic styles within the constraints of the curriculum? All of these factors affect IL delivery and whether we are developing young, well-rounded, independent lifelong learners. However, perhaps they are moot points in a setting where IL has not been sufficiently promoted and the skill-set is being delivered in a disjointed manner? The findings of this project will have implications in all areas of education design and delivery.

3.11 Teacher training: are teachers being provided with the tools they need to deliver their class plans in a way that will be of greatest benefit to their students?
3.12 Population Sample

This mixed methods research included three groups of participants; librarians from major teaching training colleges, a focus group of primary school teachers and a focus group of secondary school teachers. The librarians were selected for their association with prominent teacher training colleges using non-probability sampling. The teachers were sampled using convenience sampling, dictated by the seasonality of the project.

3.12.1 Sampling Librarians; the librarians contacted were Orla Nic Aodha from St. Patrick’s College and Audrey Geraghty, Hibernia College. The author was aware of Orla Nic Aodha from attending libcamp 2015, which was hosted by The Cregan Library, additionally she was heard speak at the A&SL Annual Seminar 2016. The author became familiar with the work of Audrey Geraghty at the DBS Library Seminar 2016, where she indicated a willingness to participate in this project. A positive response was received from both librarians, the head librarian at Hibernia was interviewed personally, while two librarians from the Information Services team at St. Patrick’s were made available for participation. Please refer to the email correspondence in appendix 7.

3.12.2 Sampling Teachers; The seasonality of this project dictated the sampling methods employed. Teachers were sourced via initial contact with members of the profession known to the author and the group was expanded by word of mouth. Eight primary teachers and eight secondary teachers were invited to attend two separate focus groups.

“Convenience sampling is very easy to do, but it’s probably the worst technique to use” (Jones, n.d.). The author acknowledges the lack of scientific prowess associated with this type of sampling, however the time of year dictated by the governing education authority ruled out approaching teachers in their place of work. Ideally, if this project had been carried out during term time teachers would have been chosen via a more reputable type of sampling.
3.13 Data Collection

As this project is the first of this nature, there was no basis in the literature on which to base the whole data collection model. Thorne-Wallington (2013) provided both the motivation for the curriculum mapping exercise and the formatting. In view of IL being a concept most familiar to librarians, there were very few experts available in both the training of teachers and IL. All means of data collection were considered; the interview method was chosen as this was the method that would provide the most insight into the topic. Initially interview was also considered for the teachers, however it was decided that focus groups would provide invaluable opportunity for discussion that may lead to new insight. This decision was corroborated by (Davino & Fabbris (2013), p65) who describes the use of focus groups in “preliminary identification of characteristics.” In this context, focus groups will be utilised as a preliminary investigation into the attitudes and awareness of teachers to IL.

3.14 Mapping Data

For the initial analysis, the hard data sources for this project have come from governmental and organisational foundations. For the purposes of the mapping exercise, the Irish curricula were sourced at www.curriculumonline.ie/ and the three chosen frameworks are readily available. This component of the research methods does not equate to primary data collection, however the analysis of data already available does provide unique perspective. This exercise also provided a factual contextual basis for the qualitative element.

3.15 Interview Data

On completion of the mapping, two other data sources were exploited; firstly, librarians in the two most prominent teacher training colleges: These participants were chosen for their expertise. At proposal stage, it was intended to only assess teachers themselves, however, on reflection, it was thought that to seek the opinion of teachers in an area they are not expert in would be of limited value. The interviews were carefully designed to assess the librarians’ opinions on the quality of IL instruction that teachers receive during their training. The librarians were also asked about their opinions on the education system in general as they provide unique perspective. The interviews were semi-structured as the questions allowed for open-ended answers and clarification to be sought where necessary.
3.16 Interview Instrument and Protocol

The interview as a data collecting instrument is a very malleable and widely used tool for gaining qualitative information about people’s experiences, views and feelings in a certain situation. The research objectives are subjectively based and are open-ended in the range of views and opinions that may be unearthed; therefore, this form of data collection is quite appropriate.

Here, the participants were selected based on their association with third level institutes that provide certification for primary and post-primary teachers.

Each was interviewed, by appointment, for a duration of 60 minutes on site, in the libraries for the convenience of the interviewees. Whether data gathering is conducted in the workplace or off-site is a contentious matter (Shelly & Rosenblatt, 2009, p. 177) and it is the opinion of the author that a conference room would provide a neutral setting which will allow the subjects to speak freely. However, this is not a contentious subject and the appropriateness for the participants was regarded most important.

The introduction consisted of a brief display of the mapping exercise, this illustrates clearly the direction of the project and sets the tone for the interview. It allowed the participants give focus to IL when responding to the questions, this maximised the value of the data gathered. A semi-structured setting provided for relevant conversation while allowing for possible clarification and expansion on certain points. The interview consisted of predefined, set questions, based around three subsets; teachers in training, qualified teachers and Irish policy. Interview protocol will be established with reference to the literature on the research hypotheses with the aim of succinctly answering the research question. Recording, note taking and transcribing will provide rigour.

3.17 Focus Group Data

Finally, data was gathered from teachers themselves. Having ascertained the extent of IL competencies within the curriculum and having gathered expert opinion on the quality of training teachers receive, teachers themselves were consulted for their opinions. The focus group subjects were invited to attend a session in which they were given a 20-minute tutorial on the subject of IL and then encouraged to discuss the topic in relation to their classroom experience, under the direction of prepared questions (the PowerPoint presentation can be found in appendix 8).
3.18 Focus Group Instrument and Protocol

Focus groups are used for various reasons, two listed by Cohen and Crabtree (2008) are “to explore new research areas” and to “clarify research findings from another method”. Here the focus group was used to confirm the findings of the mapping and the interviews and to subsequently delve into the topic further by means of guided discussion. As this is a new area of research it was thought that if teachers had a group in which to explore ideas it would be of great benefit to the topic.

For the group participants, eight primary school teachers and eight secondary teachers were invited to attend two group sessions. There was one group of primary school teachers and one of post-primary. The teachers were divided in this fashion to allow for greater engagement, as all group members were likely to have come across similar situations and challenges in their professional capacity.

Each session had an identical format; introduction of the concept of IL via a video (Accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ronp6lue9w). Then a brief summary of the findings so far was given; mapping and librarian interviews. Discussion was then guided through three general subsections; teachers while in training, qualified teachers and policy. This allowed for comparisons to be drawn between the focus group findings and that of the expert opinion of the librarians.

3.19 Academic Literary Sources

Academic literary sources for this project have come from two services; the author is fortunate enough to attend Dublin Business School (the LIS Subject Portal is invaluable) and is employed by University College Dublin, who also hold a comprehensive selection of library and information material. One limitation, in this area, that was encountered was that undergraduate module descriptors for teachers were unable to be sourced. To map these to IL competencies would have added further scope to the project. However, on completion of the mapping exercise it was felt that there was sufficient illustration of a relationship illustrated between IL competencies and school curriculum outcomes. The sources of this information were changed to the focus group discussion.
Ethics, largely, define the parameters of human actions in professional pursuits and, more specifically, the human interactions and relationships on a personal level (Barnes, 1989, p.30). This thesis aims to explore opinions of librarians and levels of IL awareness of teachers in typical Irish school environments where social norms are adhered to under a structured regime, this will not be disrupted. The ethical considerations here are not contentious; however, some mitigating steps will be taken:

Transparency: each participating individual will be given an introductory session to the project before agreeing to participate. The purpose and framework of the study will be clearly stated. To add security, at the end of each data gathering session, the participants will be asked whether they wish to remain anonymous.

Privacy: Respondents will be given the opportunity to remain anonymous for themselves and their school / college of which they will be expressing their experiences.

Process: Information has a monetary, sentimental and social value (McMenemy et.al. 2007, p. 7), for this reason it will be treated as an asset when gathering, assessing and storing it.

To conserve a primary responsibility of librarianship; access, (Preer, 2008, p. 108) all interviewees will be provided with a copy of the final dissertation and the author will make themselves available for discussion of any findings.

The ethical considerations have been restricted here as, for this project, it is not necessary to seek access to the young students being taught by the teachers. Additionally, the emphasis of the project is on collaboration and improvement, themes that evoke enthusiasm in both librarians and teachers.

The ‘ethical obligation’ of researchers as outlined by Ngulube (2015), will be appreciated; the data gathering interview process here will be outlined transparently and methodically.
3.21 Data Analysis Strategy

To provide results that give connotation, understanding and views while respecting the concept of holism, the data analysis approach for this thesis was of emergent design. The mapping exercise provided a visual analysis of the IL competencies contained within the syllabus by the nature of the scheme. It was possible to present the mapping document, in its entirety, to the contributors to the interviews and focus groups. Due to dissertation boundaries, it was not possible to present the full findings here, nevertheless, a thorough summary will be provided.

This element in turn, provided the backbone for the qualitative, primary data gathering component of the project. The findings of the interviews were summarised, as were the focus group findings. Any associations or inconsistencies found are presented as appropriate. The data analysis strategy was dictated, in part, by the data collected. The data gathered was in the form of transcripts, which were analysed for common themes and features, content will be analysed to determine attitudes and group shared ideas, a method outlined by Nigatu, T. (2009) in ‘Qualitative Data Analysis’. Full transcripts will be provided in the appendices.

Due to limitations (outlined in the previous chapter) the data collection will not reach saturation, it will, however provide a strong base point in the literature. As this project is of a unique nature, it is quite appropriate for it to be carried out on a small scale to test the hypotheses while avoiding undue cost associated with a large scale method.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

3.22 Suitability of Researcher

The researcher has achieved a BA from Trinity College, Dublin in environmental science, for which a dissertation entitled ‘The Variance of Metal Content in Biosolids’ was completed under the supervision of Professor Nick Gray. This project entailed gathering data over a three-month period from various sources nationwide. This scientific background will provide strong foundation for the quantitative mapping project that the current dissertation will be based on. It will also be an advantage when writing up the document, as a logical mind will allow for clarity and focus.

The qualitative aspects of this mixed-method undertaking are a welcome opportunity for the author to broaden her research skill set. She lacks familiarity in the recording and analysis of opinion based data and looks forward to learning and honing this new proficiency.

Almost ten years’ post-graduation the pursuit of this MSc was embarked on, the motivation for which was personal development and further education. The author has successfully completed the modular section of the post-grad while working full time (and managing a career change). This personal tenacious determination will be applied wholeheartedly to the successful completion of this project in a comprehensive fashion.

The author currently works in academic support for the Biomedical Section in the School of Medicine in University College, Dublin and intends to pursue a career in the library or education sector. It is hoped that studying an aspect of the Irish education system will support this ambition. She has enjoyed studying with DBS and looks forward to a career punctuated with CPD and an ethos of lifelong learning.
3.23 Time, Cost, Project Management

At the point of proposal submission, it was intended that this project consist of carrying out a series of interviews and presenting the data. On reflection and following discussions with the supervisor, the scale of the primary data collection has been broadened. A mapping exercise will be carried out, followed by interviews with librarians and subsequently, two focus groups consisting of teachers will be facilitated. This has affected the original Gantt chart (in appendix 9), however the author is confident that time management will not be an issue as timeliness is a characteristic of her persona.

A record of time spent on the project was kept for comparative purposes. At first, the time restriction imposed on this project seemed quite rigid, however the author now appreciates the structure this limit applies. At the time of proposal submission, it was planned to finish a complete draft of the project one month prior to the deadline, to facilitate the author taking a week away from the project and then returning with fresh eyes to proof and critique the work with reference to the Dissertation Guidebook. This buffer time will need to be reduced; however, the plan remains.

The other aspect here is that the time of year is not ideal as schools will be on their summer holidays. To arrange the teacher-centred focus groups may be a logistical challenge, however the author is confident that the subject is of enough interest that participants will be encouraged to attend.

Finances will be negligible here, travel expenses and use of annual leave days to facilitate the project will be required. This commitment is not more than was required from the modular aspect of the MSc.

The three most often occurring faults in project management are “inadequate planning, an insufficient communication between the various stakeholders, and poorly defined acceptance criteria” as defined by Zarndt (2011). These liabilities have been mitigated to a certain extent; there has been an inordinate amount of planning, there have been excellent communication lines from the dissertation supervisor and the criteria for success are clearly defined, both by the Dissertation Guidebook and the defined hypotheses.
3.24 Limitations

The limitations of this project have been scaled back since the first meeting with the dissertation supervisor. The initial strategy was to interview subjects (consisting solely of teachers) on their awareness and attitudes to IL. A concern was raised as what could be learned from interviewing subjects on a topic outside of their expertise. What value can be placed on an opinion of a person who may have only heard of the term for the first time? For this reason, the project was strengthened and redesigned. The mapping exercise has been brought in to use as a visual aid and to measure the presence of IL within the curriculum outcomes, librarians in the two most prestigious teacher training colleges in Ireland will be interviewed to assess their expert opinion and finally, teachers will be invited to participate in focus groups to incorporate their viewpoint. The author is satisfied that the limitations of this study have now been minimised, however there are some factors that will confine its remit. The limitations that apply here are as follows; researcher constraints, this project will lie within the author’s abilities, time/ seasonal constraints. The duration and timing of the project as referred to above. Scope constraints, this project will be carried out on a relatively small scale. Conformation of the findings will need to be corroborated within the literature for the project to have any authority.

3.25 Summary

This chapter has provided a description of the setting, the sampling methods and the data analysis strategy to be employed for this project. It has also outlined the ethical considerations and other project management parameters that were considered. The tripartite approach will provide strength to the findings, an element that is vital when researching new ground or a gap in the literature. The next chapter will provide the findings of these research methods.
4.0 Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

The findings of this mixed method approach shall be presented separately and then addressed as one entity for the drawing of the conclusions. This research produced too much data to list it all here, therefore, this chapter will initially list the findings of the mapping exercise, in a concise way. Full findings can be found in appendix 10. It shall then present findings from the interviews with the librarians and the focus groups with the teachers. For theses, full transcripts can be found in appendix 11, 12, 13 and 14 consecutively.

4.2 Mapping Exercise

To begin the mapping exercise, the features of the three frameworks being examined were compiled into one document (appendix 1). Tables were then generated with the outcomes of chosen curricula; primary level English and science; junior certificate level English and science and leaving cert level English and biology. As a visual aid, where a competency occurs, a box is highlighted, for every blue box, a correlation between an outcome and an IL competency was found. Below is a brief visual summary and description of the findings. Along the right hand side is an illustration of the correlations found, each framework is represented by a column, ACRL, SCONUL and ANZIL in sequence, each row represents a curriculum outcome. A full text version can be found in the appendix 10:
4.2.1 Primary Level English; [full data]

Within this syllabus, every outcome had at least one element of an IL competency. Not all competencies were referred to, this would be expected of a primary level language module where there would be a high emphasis of basic literacy. The outcomes to “retell” and to "express and communicate reactions" and "give constructive responses to writing" all appear with the frameworks. Some links to the frameworks were more tentative than others, however these links were recorded due to consideration of the level of this module. Here it is evident that there is a clear need for an Irish IL framework, detailing expected levels of competencies that should be displayed by school children at different levels.
4.2.2 Primary Level Science; (full data)

In primary school, the science curriculum is designed to develop skills within “working scientifically” and “designing and making”. Scientific procedure relates quite closely to the IL frameworks; this is most likely due to the development of an inquisitive mind. The outcomes that did not provide correlation to the IL were “observing” and “making”. These skills do lay down basic skills that later develop into an ability based in the frameworks. In order, the frameworks correspond with this syllabus from ANZIL with 7 links (illustrated on the right hand side), to ACRIL (on the left hand side) with 8 correlations to SCONUL (illustrated on the centre line) with 11 instances of their competencies showing up. This is a reflection of the specificity or generality of the phrasing of the frameworks, as the outcomes being examined here are simplistic in nature.
4.2.3 Junior Certificate Level English; [full data]

Predictably, a large jump in the desired outcomes can be observed here, compared to that expected at primary level. Out of 24 listed outcomes, 17 have a link to IL competencies described in the frameworks. While every Pillar is referred to in this subset of outcomes; “Exploring and using language”, not every standard and frame were referred to. This highlights the differing definitions held by different authorities. The outcomes that a correlation was not found with an IL competency were “Understanding the content and structure of language”. Once again, these skills relate to basic literacy, a prerequisite for IL.
4.2.4 Junior Certificate Level Science; (full data)

This illustration highlights immediately that the sciences display a much stronger link to the three IL frameworks examined than the language subjects do. This is most likely due to the methodical approach IL takes to information, similar to scientific discipline. Some differences between the frameworks can be easily identified here. Out of 46 distinct outcomes, associations were found with 32 ACRL frames, 25 with SCONUL pillars and 25 with ANZIL standards. Evidently, the 25 competency correlations observed in SCONUL and ANZIL did not relate to the same outcomes. At this stage patterns are beginning to emerge. A difference in the definitions and skill sets are being observed, while a very strong evidence of IL competencies across all levels of the syllabus is becoming indisputable. The outcomes here that did not represent a relationship with any of the frameworks were mostly contained within the “building blocks” of each category (Nature and Science, Earth and Space, Chemical World, Physical World, and Biological World), these skills all require a basic scientific knowledge needed before the literacies are applied within the field.
4.2.5 Leaving Certificate Level English; (full data)

Here an overwhelming presence of IL competencies are observed, quite a jump from the junior certificate level English, another slight change in pattern here is that the competencies occur in the syllabus with much more uniformity, the only one divergence in skillset being noted. This indicates that as the school levels increase so does the outcome structure, incorporating a broader spectrum of IL competencies, causing a comprehensive correlation. The element of “composing” within the strand of “The Language of Information” is the only subset of that which does not bear a relation to any of the IL competencies, the only divergence between the frameworks within this subject is the element “composing” within the strand of “The Language of Persuasion”, where elements from SCONUL and ANZIL were observed, but no correlation with an ACRL frame was detected.
4.2.6 Leaving Certificate Level Biology; (full data)

The syllabus for this subject demonstrates a slightly different format to that of the previous ones listed here; each outcome is not broken down or divided into elements or sets. Initially the general outcomes for the course are defined and subsequently a description of content is given. Here a return to the initial patterns is observed. The frameworks differ once again, displaying the differences in the IL components in their definitions.
4.3 Interview Findings

On 28th June 16 an interview was conducted with Audrey Geraghty, Librarian in Hibernia College, and on 6th July 2016 an interview with the same standardised structure was conducted with the Information Services team in St. Patrick’s College; Celine Campbell and Eilis Ni Raghallaigh. The findings from these interviews are as follows (full transcript can be found in Appendix 11 and 12);

4.3.1 Interview Findings Regarding Trainee Teachers

Both interviews informed the researcher that they provide various means of IL delivery via induction related classes and online tutorials. These courses all relate to using the library service and in both cases the term IL is not emphasised. As described by a St Patrick’s information services librarian;

“So we are very much about point of need rather than embedded.”

It was indicated that the direction of the instruction here is based on letting the students know they are there on induction and encouraging them to drop in if they need assistance throughout the academic year. In this way a service directed by student need is offered.

Hibernia react to student needs in a slightly different manner; library induction has moved from the first afternoon of the first day of induction (when students are tired and overwhelmed) to the third week when a need to use the library has been established by other course work. As a reaction to demand there is an additional webinar later in the year coming closer to assessment deadlines.

Both libraries are acting as a response to the need their students are requesting.

Neither library is calling their training IL or referring to the skillset.

Neither academic library associated with a prominent teacher training college is emphasising lifelong learning, both are responding to a need- to assist students complete their studies in an efficient manner.
4.3.2 Interview Findings Regarding IL levels of Trainee Teachers

The library at St. Patrick’s is measuring the skills of the student body as a whole, they do not filter by programme and so no comparison can be drawn by this data. However, one phenomena described in the literature was uncovered;

“In DCU on a whole, they did a survey with the first years and a lot of the feedback, the students felt that they were more information literate than they were”

When pressed for an opinion on the IL levels of teachers a very interesting comment was made;

“a lot of the students that do teaching, they seem to be hand-fed. They’re given what they need to find, I think, I didn’t say earlier, I don’t think they are as information literate as the others, possibly, as the humanity students.”

An opinion was expressed that the academic instruction of teachers was more of a traditional school format based on the use of text books, while other programmes in the college place a higher emphasis on facilitating the creation of an independent student.

In Hibernia they currently only provide courses at students within or entering the teaching profession. Here a broad mix of IL skills are observed on entry to the college, they aim to gauge this during tutorials and support these students. The skill that was identified as important was that of ‘present’;

“particularly for teachers, their ability to go out and transfer what they have learned to students and I think there will be a broad mix in that, in that some will be very confident using resources and demonstrating them, I think some students will not be. And that’s going to apply across the board, and I think we need to be aware of it as well, you know, some students will have a difficulty with the resources and transferring the skill and that’s where we need to look a little bit more, and even tailor the training maybe for these students.”
4.3.4 Interview Findings Regarding Librarians Opinions on the IL levels of Professional Teachers

The information services team at St. Patrick’s indicated how difficult IL instruction can be in the absence of a national framework or definition. An opinion was expressed that theoretical musings are not practically applicable; this is an issue that could be addressed in the literature. A movement towards practical endeavour and away from theory should be provided from publishing librarians;

“That it turns up in all of these reports- what kind of graduate do we want to produce, in 2020 and in 2050, and all of that lifelong learning stuff comes up, critical thinking, evaluation, all of that. But its nearly like a theory as opposed to how does it benefit our teachers.”

The very same issue was described by the Hibernia librarian;

“I think everyone has a different idea what it actually means and I think students are no different, so, they probably don’t understand the term as fully as they should and as you said, they are teaching it, so there needs to be a refocus on where they are introduced it and they need to have some sort of definition in their heads, particularly, as teachers.”

4.3.5 Interview Findings Regarding the Librarians Opinions Irish Education Policy

The format of the leaving cert was a dominant topic here;

“a one-off exam that tests all knowledge, and that’s not fair, it doesn’t address people with different learning needs”

St Patrick’s

“and the other thing I’ll say is a weakness; the leaving cert. I suppose the notion that you have to remember tons and tons of information, and that’s by rota, problem solving and critical thinking are gone, out the window.”

Hibernia
4.3.6 Interview Findings; A Summary of the Themes

On conclusion and analysis of the interviews with the experts in IL delivery to trainee teachers the following themes were uncovered;

- The term IL and the uncertainty of its definition
- The lack of framework to support Irish teachers
- Academic librarians tailoring services to a point of need, rather than an emphasis on the whole
- The weaknesses of rote learning
- The difficulty in the process of introducing change to the national curriculum
4.4 Focus Group Findings

On 16th July 2016 a focus group of four primary school teachers was held, and on 18th July 2016, a focus group with the same regularised structure was conducted with a group consisting of three secondary school teachers and an S&A who works in a secondary school. The findings of these discussion groups are as follows (full transcript can be found in Appendix 13 and 14);

4.4.1 Focus Group Findings Regarding Teachers and IL

Of the eight subjects who were facilitated in conversation, there were some consistencies observed, and some insightful opinions expressed. Of the eight, not one teacher had heard the term IL before, either during college or in a professional capacity, in addition to this, none of the group members had ever encountered a CPD opportunity to develop library or information skills. An obvious example of a possible weakness in IL skills was displayed by both groups when discussing critical assessment of a resource;

Figure vii; Conversation from Primary School Focus Group

Misunderstanding of the concept was demonstrated by the Secondary group too;

“That would kind of go with evaluating the project you have done I suppose”

Secondary Group
4.4.2 Focus Group Findings Regarding the Curriculum and Assessment

The teachers were directed to discuss their opinions on various aspects of the curriculum. The primary group showed no shock that they were teaching a skillset they are not expert in; “that can be said for a lot of things” that they teach, whereas the secondary group seem to concentrate very much on their own subject and don’t tend to deviate. The curricula are used in the same manor by both groups; in generating the long term aims in their lesson plans. Primary school teachers seem to rely on them to a greater extent to the secondary, who have the leaving certificate exam to drive the focus of a lot of their teaching;

“\textit{I wouldn’t look at the curriculum as much as I should}”

“I don’t look at it as much anymore, the first year or two you’re teaching you are, kind of like, looking at it the whole time but then ...”

\textbf{Primary Group}

“I refer back to the curriculum when I do my plans, so not very often, I’m teaching the same course each year. I would be more directed by the past exam papers, what questions have been coming up, what topics are popular. I would only really look at the curriculum if I wanted to check a detail of my plan or if there was a change.”

\textbf{Secondary Group}

Assessment is something that the groups were quite separate on; the primary group expressed a difficulty in accurately assessing the skills of every member of the group;

“\textit{Assessment is so hard}”

“It’s nearly impossible”

“Well, its grand to tick off their work, but to actually do a, they want you to sit down and interview a kid. the way they see it, you sit down with a kid and read a passage with them and think it through, and see what they can do but that would take a long time and you can’t do it with all the kids”

While the secondary group have a very obvious and imminent assessment gauge;

“\textit{Well, their exam results speak for themselves}”
4.4.3 Focus Group Findings Regarding Policy

When questioned on why IL is not a concept supported in Ireland when compared to the Welsh framework, the teachers were unable to provide insight beyond speculation;

“I wonder if they consider whether information literacy is just literacy, and they don’t differentiate it as a separate skill?”

Primary Group

“Do you think they are not mentioning it because they see it as, like, a trip to the library, and they are looking at- well everything is online now so... you know? So they think- we are not investing in that. But not everything is online and findable, and what college student doesn’t spend a ton of time in the library?”

Secondary Group

There seemed to be some uncertainty regarding policy in education in general among the groups, indicating a lack of general organisational understanding;

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That is my next question for you- why do you think there is no mention of it, when there is a European group on IL, when Scotland and Wales have a national framework?

I don’t even know who writes the curricula, is it a committee...
I don’t know who starts it
Like a group
Does it say at the start of the new language book?
I’m sure it does but I didn’t see it
I think that maybe the reason it hasn’t gone mainstream is the lack of a definition?
But why didn’t they make an Irish framework?
Ye, because it seems like quite an obvious thing to do

Figure viii; Primary Group re Policy

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4.4.4 Focus Group Findings; A Summary of the Themes

On conclusion and analysis of the focus groups transcripts it is quite clear that teachers are occupied with many issues. The primary group demonstrated an eagerness to develop a rounded child, but while keeping them safe in a world of technology, social media and cyberbullying. They were very enthusiastic about the privacy values that are within the IL frameworks. The secondary school teachers are driven almost exclusively by results; they enjoy grading and assigning marks to their students, who in turn are driven by striving to achieve these grades. In a competitive troposphere where there is no mode to measure critical thinking or independent learning it is problematic to envision where the concept of IL could practically be placed. The only opening seems to be as a graded skillset that is preparing the leaving cert student for third level.
4.5 Conclusion of Findings

In unity, these findings provide an illustration of IL within the Irish education system. The three hypotheses were supported by the research;

1. IL competencies, as described by the SCONUL, ANZIL and ACRL Frameworks, were found to be present in the Irish Education Curricula and Syllabuses to a large extent.

2. During their initial and subsequent training, teachers are not made aware of the IL skillset, as they are completely unfamiliar with the term.

3. Teachers and students would benefit from a government, or other national, initiative backing IL awareness

The interesting aspect of this project is not only the findings, but the reasons as to why the system would benefit from an injection of well-founded IL policy. The following chapter will discuss this.
5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the data analysis will be discussed to draw conclusions, this will be done using structure provided by the hypotheses of the dissertation and with reference to the literature review which incorporates the wider environment in which this project is positioned.

5.2 Hypotheses 1 Addressed: IL competencies, as described by the SCONUL, ANZIL and ACRL Frameworks, are not present in the Irish Education Curricula and Syllabuses.

This hypothesis was addressed by the mapping exercise; it was irrefutably found that all of the IL competencies outlined by SCONUL, ANZIL and ACRL were contained within the syllabuses examined. This exercise was carried out on English and Science or Biology at the top end of primary, junior certificate and leaving certificate levels. It is strongly recommended that this exercise be continued throughout the curricula at all levels, thus providing the basis for an IL guidance document. Precedence has already been set for this type of project as Wales and Scotland both provide such documents. The creation of “an information literacy curriculum map (ILCM) has provided a more cohesive delivery of IL across the curriculum” (Charles, 2015) in a third level setting. In Berkley College, collaboration between teaching staff, librarians and administrators was increased, the needs of students and stakeholders were considered in unison, allowing for greater “responsive regulation” (Hislop, 2012).

5.3 Hypotheses 2 Addressed: During their initial and subsequent training, teachers are not made aware of the IL skillset.

While the libraries at the two teacher training colleges give in depth library training, they do not refer to the skillset of IL. When the two focus groups comprising of primary and secondary teachers were asked if they were familiar with the term, 100% of them were not. The mapping exercise has demonstrated that teachers are teaching all of the IL competencies to Irish students, however they are clearly not cognisant of the expression. In an experiment to provide sixth-form students with pro bono IL training, a solicitors’ firm expressed the following (Hunter, 2013);

“the concept of authority of websites and looking at domains appeared completely new”

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Irish student body is no more information literate than their equivalents’ in South London, however we cannot expect them to be when Irish teachers are not being trained in the area.
5.3 Hypotheses 3 Addressed: Teachers and students would benefit from a government, or other national, initiative backing IL awareness

Poor IL standards are barriers to academic achievement (Klomsri & Tedre, 2016), the Maynooth library outreach programme recognised, locally, a deficiency in this area in their incoming students and this lack of readiness has been recognised by Smith et.al. (2013), and others in the literature. The professional workforce needs an information literate body, in order to thrive; students need to be information literate. It would be good economic practice if the Irish Government were to recognise the importance of IL in education delivery. This, in turn would have the knock on effect of raising the quality of life, increasing the emphasis on life skills and independent learning in the school system. It has been shown, that in areas of low economic wealth ‘an improvement in the information literacy skills status of artisans could positively impact their quality of life’ (Ukachi, 2015).
5.4 IL in Irish Schools; a Closer Look

The mapping exercise that was carried out for this project demonstrated unequivocally that all of the IL competencies are contained within the primary school English and science, junior certificate English and science and the leaving certificate English and biology curricula. On discussion with both of the librarians and the groups of teachers it became apparent that the leaving cert was identified as a source of some contention, as it is not an inclusive way to test the skills of a student. Some skills are difficult to test in written exams, such as critical thinking. This research however did not find a lack of critical thinking outcomes:

“Research as Inquiry and Searching as Strategic Exploration” in primary level science,

Skills of "Interpreting" and "Drawing Conclusions" also in primary level science,

“showing a critical appreciation of language” in junior certificate English,

“critically analyse data to identify patterns and relationships“ for junior cert science

and

“an ability to record and interpret biological data” for leaving certificate biology

These skills all represent a skillset that is synonymous with an inquisitive mind that would be adept at recognising whether a source is reliable by analysing the information available. However, these skills are not recognised or emphasised in a practical way during teacher training:

“of the lecturers who is very engaged wanted the students to be more independent, to be able to think critically, to look for information themselves, to be able to use refworks, but I don’t know that all of them think like that.

St. Patrick’s

“it’s important to not give them everything. It’s important that they develop critical thinking skills and problem solving and that’s something that I don’t think is addressed you know, in a lot of cases”

Hibernia
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

This point is further illustrated in the confusion among teachers when questioned about critical assessment of a source (please refer to figure vii in Findings).

5.5 Role of Librarians in Education Delivery to Irish Students

When librarians are delivering instruction to trainee teachers they do not refer to IL, according to this research. When librarians are brought into the schools to give talks they do not refer to IL. Teachers have not heard of the phrase. Students going into third level study lack in IL competencies. Graduates are not as proficient in IL as employers expect. These are all measurable and observable facts. A conclusion must be drawn that librarians are not championing IL with effect. The academic debate relating to IL, of which there is plenty, has served the idiom itself a disfavour. Scholarly musings of definitions have rendered the phrase unapproachable and intimidating to school teachers. Furthermore, the lack of an Irish framework that is relatable to the school system has left Irish student affronted and left at a disadvantage on a global scale. It would be of huge benefit to our students if the literature was to diverge from redefining and reframing of IL towards those of practical implementation of IL such as; Hunter (2013); ‘Information Literacy and the Google Generation: Teaching Research Skills to Sixth-Formers’ in Legal Information Management.

5.6 Lack of Programme/ Framework

In conversation with the teachers it was found that their need for a framework was unanimous but dissimilar. The primary school teachers need level-appropriate posters to refer to when a need arises during a comprehension or other lesson. The secondary teachers need the skillset to be assessed and graded formally to create enthusiasm for learning this life skill in an environment where chapters are skipped if they are not going to appear on the exam. All of the teachers critically need IL training. The Welsh IL Framework has been quite successful, during research three librarians and eight front line educators could not discern a good reason why no Irish framework has been provided to plug the obvious gap. As a further illustration of the need for a framework; every piece of reliable literature on IL begins by describing the environment in which it is set and then the framework to be applied. Without strong foundation, a robust programme cannot be built.
5.7 School Curricula and IL

Primary school teachers refer to their curricula with a frequency that wains with years of service, according to this research. Secondary school teachers look forward to exam time more so, choosing to base lessons around what students need to regurgitate for their final exams at second level. It has been established that IL is well represented within the curriculum, at second level it needs to be represented more stalwartly in the assessment to generate enthusiasm.

Shepherd et.al. (2015), remark on the difference between service learning and teacher training, the difference being the emphasis. Service learning involves application of learning, usually to the benefit of the community, whereas teachers aim to impart their knowledge to their students bereft of any greater aim. This provides juxtaposition to IL in the curriculum; all of the competencies are there, but huge community and educational benefits would be reaped if the emphasis of the delivery were to be altered. More inclusive pedagogic discovery needs to be achieved. This skew in emphasis and misclassification of IL skills is not unique to the Irish; in a survey of QEP’s (Quality Enhancement Plans), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) identified that a considerable number “have integrated information literacy learning outcomes as part of another topic” (Harris, 2013).
5.8 IL and CPD for Teachers

None of the teachers engaged in discussion for this project had encountered a CPD opportunity to upskill in IL (exemplified by none of them being familiar with the term or having heard it during their professional employment to date). With the introduction of Croke Park hours for teachers in 2010 there is obligation of faculties to meet all together on occasion for various managerial organisational purposes. As it is difficult to conduct a meeting with such large numbers, these hours are often filled with a lecture on various topics. None of the subjects had been given a demonstration on IL during the last six years. A passive recognition of this was observed during this research;

“Ok, well, there is a huge number of highly capable trainee teachers coming in and there are a huge number of graduates being churned out of all institutions across Ireland, that’s one of the key strengths. And that needs feed into the schools, and for me, that means CPD, I think is crucial for teachers, they do get some recognition, but it does need to be a continual thing and it needs to be easy for them to get access to CPD and any of the courses that are available are crucial for keeping the skills going. “

Hibernia

“They probably are there, but they are optional too. It’s probably one that you would skip over. We have never had anyone come in to speak to us about it. “

Secondary Focus Group
5.9 Irish Education System

The ridged nature and rote-learning characteristic of the leaving cert was identified by all librarians as a weakness of the Irish education system (that, in addition, to the pedagogic approach to the Irish language). The focus group consisting of secondary school teachers indicated that their students are highly motivated by being awarded grades and by the prospects of the leaving certificate:

* Is the term IL important if all of the skills are taught across the syllabus?

“Well if you give it a name, it’s easier to work on it. And people do like to be graded on things. Well some people hate it, but mostly they love to be able to get marks.”

Secondary Focus Group

The primary school teachers expressed a greater freedom to explore topics that arise during the teaching day that may not be specifically defined by the curricula. This allows a greater emphasis on the development of a student as a whole person, rather than aiming at academic achievement. In contrast, American schools are obliged to teach via methods that are evidence based (Emmons et.al., 2009). In Ireland, among healthcare professionals evidence-based practice is the norm; the National Documentation Centre on Drug Use (NDC), provided a course on IL “in order to increase the participants’ knowledge of evidence-based practice and enable them to pursue an evidence-based approach in their professional work” (Galvin, 2011). This is exactly the approach that would benefit the education system, a move in the literature towards practical application of theory and a move within the schools to evidence-based methodologies.

5.10 IL Instruction of Trainee Teachers

In America, academic librarians working with trainee teachers have the duty of teaching the ACRL IL competency standards. A survey carried out by (Stockham & Collins, 2012) drew some conclusions; in the table below the conclusions drawn are in the left hand column, findings from this study on the right:
**Stockham & Collins, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many new teachers believe the ability to “Google” constitutes mastery of IL and ICT skills. They think everything on the internet is true, like if it’s on the internet it’s the same as if it was a peer reviewed book. Ask Google. Ye, so they don’t understand what is right and what’s wrong. (Primary Focus Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers confuse IL with basic technology skills. [Trainee teacher] Students, coming in, believe that because they have various digital devices on hand and they can use them so, they are literate. (Hibernia Librarian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It seems there is no overall emphasis on “teaching the teachers” these skills and concepts. Have you encountered the phrase IL in your professional practise to date? No no, I haven’t, not before today. No, I don’t think so No, I don’t think you would (Secondary Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The emphasis on testing keeps teachers from giving sufficient time to IL. Well if you give it a name, it’s easier to work on it. And people do like to be graded on things. Well some people hate it, but mostly they love to be able to get marks. (Secondary Focus Group)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some new teachers are learning from veteran teachers living in the older paradigm that libraries are for checking out books. The gap I see, where it comes to IL is maybe among older teachers; maybe their digital skills aren’t as strong as their students, this might cause them to steer away from the information lesson because they are not confident using the device? I think probably some do steer away from the ICT, but that’s not a subject in itself, its meant to be integrated across everything. So there is a time you have to do it. We don’t have a computer room though, do you? (Primary Focus Group)

Some new teachers have good skills, but don’t seem to be transferring them to their students. But as to what I would talk about going beyond, particularly for teachers, their ability to go out and transfer what they have learned to students and I think there will be a broad mix in that, in that some will be very confident using resources and demonstrating them, I think some students will not be. (Hibernia Librarian)

Table 1; American teacher training -v- Irish

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This table shows that trainee teacher IL instruction needs to be improved, in an environment where IL is defined, and an environment where it is not.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

5.11 Lifelong Learning in the Irish Education System

This study has demonstrated that Irish librarians in academic roles in third level institutions for trainee teachers view the leaving certificate as a weakness of the education system. It became clear during the secondary focus group that students and teachers alike are concerned, primarily with achieving grades, towards the focus of the final exam. This causes a disregard of life skills and of IL, as there are no specific assigned marks for this skill set. There is a disassociation among this cohort between IL skills and improved academic performance. In contrast, the primary focus group seemed to have a freer attitude when it came to addressing issues that come up day to day. There is a greater emphasis in Irish students below 12 years of age, in providing opportunities to find lessons in current affairs. This is a feature that needs to be brought to second level. Among students that are preparing for third level, there is no doubt that a whole-person approach would be advantageous, as opposed to the current system.

5.12 Focus on other Literacies in the Irish Education System

This particular topic is not high on the agenda in the Irish education system; the primary school focus is on basic literacy and development of some learning skills, the secondary school system is very strongly subject based. Students learn the information they need to know to get them through the exams. This research found no evidence of teacher awareness of different types of literacy, that confusion is the root of an assumed ignorance of the Department of Education;

“I would say it [IL] has probably been absorbed into literacy in itself maybe, with all of the comprehension stuff you are going through information literacy but with a very strong emphasis on literacy itself”

Primary Focus Group

The metaliteracies, health or media literacies are not on teachers’ radars, furthermore critical assessment is misunderstood and the development of the skill to recognise an information is completely negated in all Irish classrooms. The only section of IL that teachers are aware of is digital skills, the skillset most promoted by government.
5.13 Technology & Digital Literacy

The author’s overall impression, while discussing technology and digital literacy was that of a concern for safety and young student’s lack of understanding of privacy issues. As a result of the rise of social media, teachers observed that parents lack understanding with regard to their children’s right to privacy. A need for this issue of safety and privacy to be comprehensively addressed in the curriculum was drawn here. There is not a great need for digital literacy classes as modern technology is intuitive and largely accessible. The emphasis in Irish schools should be on the skills needed to use technology wisely and to be aware of confidentiality and information rights issues. Within the realm of technology, the misinterpretation of IL is most clear; Sandercock (2016) demonstrated, that in a third level institution that students were thought to have a high level of IL, “However when asked a series of questions about each of the seven IL skills identified by SCONUL, there was a large discrepancy”.

Another issue that was raised in the area of technology was the practical challenges that come with supervising 30 or more small children when using modern technology;

“-It would be very difficult to make sure they were all on task, you would have to go around checking the whole time

-They won’t be able to write anymore too, which is a disaster

-iPads are not good for learning to read either, kids need to be able to drag their finger across a page without it flicking around

-It’s more difficult to concentrate on each word too, comprehension seems to be more difficult"

Primary Focus Group
5.14 IL Competencies in the Curricula

There is an enormous and palpable discrepancy within the Irish education system; IL is taught but not clearly defined, a presumed high standard of IL skills has been disproven several times. This research has illustrated that IL competencies do occur in the syllabus but to what extent are teachers required to teach the competencies?

**ACRL:** all six frames of IL occur in the curriculum, some to a greater extent than others. The language subjects throughout the levels display outcomes that are synonymous with ‘scholarship as conversation’ and ‘information has value’ whereas the sciences emphasise ‘research as inquiry’ and ‘searching as strategic exploration’. Although each frame occurs, some aspects within the frames do not; within the frame ‘authority is constricted and contextual’ is the skill to ‘use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility’. This skill was not observed within the school curricula mapped. However, the outcome ‘students should be able to apply, where possible, their knowledge and understanding of biology in personal, social and economic spheres and to make informed evaluations’ in leaving cert biology does require acknowledgement of reliable authority, which does fall within the remit of the extent of this frame. Within the language subjects mapped all outcomes regarding forming arguments and assessing opinions do not refer to finding reliable sources of information, they imply comparing statements to one own’s prior knowledge.

**SCONUL:** the language used by this framework is most simple, for this reason the teachers in the focus groups appreciated it with most regard. It is this frame that has been adapted to the Welsh school system and its representation is most visual, enabling its use to a greater extent among young students. The uncomplicatedness of the language in this framework means it seems to occur most frequently in the Irish curricula mapped. It is imperative to note here, however, that the pillars of identify, scope, plan, gather, evaluate, manage and present do not refer to critical assessment. Within evaluate, the outcome requires analysis of a ‘source research context Issues of quality, accuracy, relevance, bias, reputation and credibility relating to information and data sources’. As the area of critical assessment is so poor within Irish schools, the framework must emphasise this skill thoroughly.

**ANZIL:** this was the third and final framework mapped to the curricula. By this point a pattern had already been established. The unique feature of the ANZIL framework is standard 6:
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

“The information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information”.

This skill is not represented in the other two frameworks to the same extent. Through the mapping exercise, interviews and focus groups it can be concluded that this standard is at the discretion of the teacher. The curricula are updated so seldom that Irish students will only gain the opportunity to apply their learning to current world issues if their teacher has a personal interest in current affairs’. This is a weakness in the system that was not articulated directly during research but became apparent on analysis.

As this mapping exercise has not been carried out previously, on any other curricula, it is not possible to draw comparisons. This project has highlighted the need for a similar mapping project to be carried out across all subjects and with the third level outcomes of the trainee teachers, accreditation standard should also be mapped to determine the true extent to which IL occurs in the education system. This method could be applied in the future, independent of geography or education level as it draws simple correlations.
5.15 IL and Irish Professional Teachers

The extent to which IL is taught to trainee teachers has been defined by this research and can be summarised as; library skills to assist in achieving academic success, but excluding an examination of IL and with little emphasis on lifelong learning. Considering this, teachers were found to be enthusiastic in helping their students become rounded learners; the primary focus group identified this when one taught another about a method of identifying lesson aims for the class. Here the teachers verified that they are not resistant to change and that they are willing to try methods to improve their pedagogic approach. The secondary focus group were less open; they were however very conscious that they want their students to achieve as well as they can in the Leaving Certificate. They showed most enthusiasm for IL when it was suggested that grades could be awarded if IL competencies were to be formally assessed. Secondary school teachers succumb to Leaving Certificate pressure as well as their students to the detriment to enhancing independent learning and discovery.

5.16 IL Competencies and Teacher Comprehension

This research indicates that teachers, following a brief introduction, believe that they have an understanding of IL, however during further discussion; misunderstandings of some aspects of it were uncovered. This ignorance and over estimation of one owns skills has been identified in secondary school teachers (McKeever, 2013), third level students (McGuinness, 2009) and graduates (Raish & Rimland, 2016). By providing Irish teachers with a syllabus based framework, this lack of clarity could be reduced, teacher understanding could be at least extended to the relevant aspects of the lessons they are teaching. A framework would also provide a benchmark on which to measure achievements.
5.17 Utilisation of the Frameworks

Across the IL literature, every article begins by defining the framework to be used, this is to provide a standard for assessment or success. Delivery and pedagogic approach was considered with both the librarians and teachers. Some consensus was established, the absence of an IL framework designed for specific use of Irish teachers is an issue that was highlighted at several junctures.

In definition;

“I think everyone has a different idea what it actually means and I think students are no different, so, they probably don’t understand the term as fully as they should and as you said, they are teaching it, so there needs to be a refocus on where they are introducing it and they need to have some sort of definition in their heads, particularly, as teachers.”

Hibernia Librarian

In delivery and lacking a defined framework;

“But without explanation I think it can be unhelpful actually, so I think you have to be really careful about how you introduce it...

I think it would be really difficult to introduce that in primary school, and even secondary.”

St Patrick’s Librarian

In teaching the skills in the classroom;

“And it’s easier as a teacher, if you have something you can quickly refer to, that if they know the six words- like your evaluate, your scan for information. You could refer to it a lot easier as you are teaching”

Primary Focus Group

The timing of the delivery is something all subjects were willing to contribute on;

“As a concept, I’d say first year of secondary school. Because I think the junior cert has changed to a point where you can have this group and these assessments, that’s an ideal place to debate, why not introduce it to them there, with the hope that by the time they make it up, there will be a slight change in the leaving cert.”

Hibernia Librarian

“I think that if you introduced the concept in first year, by the time they got to leaving cert they would already be doing it. And if it was reiterated. So say it was introduced in first year,
and this is just part of your learning, this is how you learn. Then you would learn to question where the information has come from and everyone would be working together to find and assess, and then by the time you get to fourth year, you get your librarian in, reiterate all of those skills and teach from and outside person who says this is what you have been learning, this is what it is called. By the time they are in leaving cert, they are doing it.”

Secondary Focus Group

In conclusion of this section, the delivery of IL is an area that teachers can be fervent about. They were not found to be resistant to change, they recognise the need to be provided with tools; both classroom based resources and training. In this area they have been failed.
5.18 IL Skill Gap

On examination of this research, the IL skill gap on entry to third level is something that librarians and teachers of all levels are aware of. The Maynooth outreach project was mentioned by the librarians, while the school teachers had not been aware of it, they were all impressed when they were informed about it. The area in which this project took place is less than one hour by car to the location of the Maynooth initiative. In order to achieve progress, the teaching profession has a responsibility to communicate in areas of advancement. Emmons et.al, (2009) have demonstrated that communication between faculty and information professionals reduces the skills gap within third level education. However, teachers must embrace the concept of collaboration and create communication pathways so that progress can be made. This network can only be of advantage after the creation of a national IL framework to provide foundation.
5.20 5.19 Preparation for 3rd level

This research has established a very strong emphasis on achieving an adequate grade within secondary school teaching. The researcher became aware, on analysis, on preparing their students to do as well as they can, and to achieve a place in third level, they have inadvertently excluded the skills they need to advance in college from the curriculum. This ironic situation cannot be avoided in the current system of examination. It has also been to the detriment to the delivery of the Irish language, where rote-learning is considered an inadequate method of learning;

“In terms of weakness I guess, probably the first thing I’d say, in terms of teachers, the levels of Irish and the way Irish is integrated into the curriculum,”

Hibernia Librarian

“It is always thought that the way Irish is taught is a weakness of the system”

Primary Focus Group

So it has been established that IL provides a more rounded approach to independent learning and that the current subject based system lacks in its delivery of some subjects, some areas of independent study and in preparing second level students for third level. The sum of these points provides compelling argument for the formal inclusion of IL into the Irish education system.
5.20 Summary

In conclusion, this project has corroborated many aspects of the literature and it has broken some new ground. By unequivocally demonstrating the components of IL being incorporated into the Irish school curriculum it has provided foundation for development of an adapted framework. In addition, and providing strength to the argument, teachers have provided evidence that they are willing to incorporate the concept of IL into their teaching, provided it can fit into their school day. Primary teachers need visual aids, posters and succinct lessons that will introduce and reiterate principles of comprehension and critical thinking. Secondary school teachers need a structure in which they can provide grades to their students for striving towards independent learning. These initiatives can only be provided by the governing body, in the environment where the Irish Government are yet to publicise the term IL, perhaps this is the first hurdle to accomplish.
5.3.1 Recommendations for Teachers

An innocent ignorance of IL was observed in the subjects of this project. It is recommended that teachers need to be trained in the area of IL, they cannot do this without the support of their governing body.

On an institutional level, the eight teachers that were members of the focus groups are now equipped to deliver IL skills in a more cognisant manor.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Policy

This enquiry has demonstrated satisfactorily that teachers need structures in place to support them if they are to deliver the IL concept to their students. This is a long term recommendation. In the interim, and at a reasonable budget, the Department of Education could produce an information film; an age-appropriate informative feature would be of great benefit to both teachers and young students. It would plant the seed for future introduction of the subject formally into the curricula.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Teacher Training Colleges

This project demonstrated that school level students would benefit if library skills classes explained the concept of, and used the phrase IL to teachers during their training.

5.3.4 Recommendations for Librarians

**Communication:** It is recommended that librarians should recognise the stakeholders of IL beyond third level institutions. The profession has improved in its collaborative efforts within themselves, however, the time has come to branch out. Librarians must demonstrate their expertise twofold, in lobbying of political leaders and by engaging with other education experts.

**Publications:** Academic debate of IL has provided insight and advancement in theory. This has, possibly, excluded various stakeholders from accessing the material. This projects proposes that the literature should emphasise practical application of IL on an establishment level, until such time that policy advances to support this movement. Where it is possible to provide advantage to a generation of students, academic superciliousness should be replaced with champions of IL, providing accessible, functional tools for school teachers.
6.0 Personal Reflection

6.1 Rationale for Undertaking MSc

I was very fortunate through the years of economic recession; I retained my job and did not endure a pay cut. I did, however, become complacent with regards to career progression and personal and professional development. In 2013 I made the decision to pursue the MSc in Library and Information Management; I attended the library in DBS for a week’s work experience. This plus a feeling a need to upskill cemented the decision. I applied for the course in 2013, I was accepted but the course did not run due to accreditation issues. I applied to the equivalent course in UCD, got accepted, paid my fees, realised the part time course would not allow me to work full time, got my fees returned! Prior to 2014/15 academic year DBS phoned me to inquire as to whether I would be interested in taking the course, they had retained my previous application, and so in 2014 I commenced the course in the hopes of it leading to further career opportunities.

6.2 Discussion of Skills Development

On entering the MSc, I had completed my under-grad in environmental science almost ten years previously. I was confident in my academic abilities, however rusty they were at the beginning. I had gained practical and customer service skills in the beginning of my career. Attendance of this MSc provided me with new learning skills and subject knowledge, but I think the most valuable lesson was that I learned of my tenaciousness (no doubt funded in my natural stubbornness). The undertaking of this MSc was both difficult and satisfying.

One real-world skill that I gained from this MSc was the ability to present to an audience of colleagues. I had given presentations in college, but the emphasis on these skills during my MSc helped me gain confidence in this area. The level of active participation of the DBS librarians also gave rise to opportunity. I volunteered to speak at the SLIP event; this was confirmation of my new developed skill, as it was very different to speaking in front of my own (friendly) classmates.
6.3 Knowledge and Skills Acquired During the Dissertation Process

6.3.1 Secondary Research Process

I have always enjoyed reading and so the primary challenge of conducting secondary research for assessments throughout the MSc was finding adequate times to search, read, analyse and manage. The tutorial that Maria Rogers gave us on using Zotero and Easybib made was invaluable and made study much more manageable. My tactic to ensure my studies did not force me to sacrifice too much of my personal life was to rise at 6.00 am on Saturdays and Sundays and work until 11 or 12, just on time for family and friends rising for brunch! I must say that I was at an advantage as I secured a job in UCD in December 2015, this afforded me access to a huge amount of bibliographic material, however, the LIS subject portal that DBS offers is the most useful tool I encountered while researching.

For the secondary research for the dissertation itself, management of the volume of resources was essential. I used excel to keep a list (in the correct bibliographical format) and to keep notes on the important points and where in my report I would use the paper. My natural aptitude of list-keeping and organisation helped here. It was satisfying, on writing my discussion to search and find papers I had already referenced- confirming that my research was thorough. Please see examples of reference tracking and report word count below.
6.3.2 Primary Research Process

As previously mentioned, for my undergrad I had studied within the sciences, for my thesis I had undertaken measurements of metals in biosolids and discussed possible sources. Lab work is something I associate heavily with primary research. Though I am not very maths-minded I comprehend the generation of cold hard numbers as data, rather than conversational. For my postgrad I found it a challenge to cognitively accept interviews and opinion gathering as ‘real’ data. However, once I got my head around it I relished the opportunity to expand my skill base in this area. The most challenging aspect of this type of research was asking people to contribute and to give their time, for little imbursement. The librarians were all very willing, the teachers during their summer holidays, less so.
6.3.3 Dissertation Formulation

The idea for my research topic was inspired by informal conversation with teachers and by the Teaching Librarian module we completed in the first year of our studies. I am glad that I chose a topic that interests me as to write a report of this magnitude on a topic of limited interest would have been most difficult. It seemed clear to me that there is a gap in our education system that could be measured in some way. The secondary research element of the project highlighted a gap in the research in which this project could fit. The most ground breaking part of this project was suggested by my supervisor. The mapping exercise was a prolonged process but I feel content that this aspect of the project is unique, and it provided a strong foundation for the further two steps in the investigation. It was an invaluable tool to demonstrate the nub of the project. Due to professional and personal commitments I have chosen to submit two weeks early, however I feel that I have committed sufficient time and effort that my grade will not be negatively affected. I feel that I have done as well as I can with this dissertation under current circumstances.

6.4 Learning Style

Kolb’s experimental learning style theory of experience, reflect, analyse and plan represents the four stages of learning, four types of learners are also described. To simulate all of these steps in a modular based, classroom situated course is a challenge. I feel that the dissertation phase brought these steps to realisation. On reflection of Honey and Mumford’s learning styles; Activist, Theorist, Pragmatist and Reflector I believe I fall into the Activist or Pragmatist category. I find it most challenging to reflect on theory in the absence of practical application. Perhaps this is a reflection of my under-grad once again, I relish in the doing and improving nature of academia, I do not relate to musings and intellectual philosophy.
6.5 Career Plan

My career has been without a plan up until I began to pursue the MSc. In December 2015 I achieved an administrative role in the School of Medicine in UCD. I have no doubt that the course highlighted my ability to work had and my commitment which contributed to my being hired. To accept this job was a gamble; I accepted a pay drop in place of greater opportunity for promotion. I am glad to say that this gamble has paid off. In August 2016 I will move to the School of Agriculture in UCD for a promotion. I will continue to strive to achieve my upmost in my professional life, I don’t see opportunities in my near future to work in a library, however to work within an education or health librarian role really does appeal to me. Whether or not I work in the sector in the future, completion of the MSc has been worthwhile.

Below is a summary of the time I spent on this project from the date of being issued my supervisor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/06/2016</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thesis Meeting: review proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>make some changes to project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/06/2016</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Study: write 2000 words for lit review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/06/2016</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Study: Format tables for mapping exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/06/2016</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Study: Fill in 4/6 Tables (2 left)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13/06/2016</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Study: Finish filling tables for mapping exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thesis Meeting: review mapping, set out next work to be done</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>write up meeting, list homework to be done</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/06/2016</td>
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<td>Study: draft up email interview request</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>draft up interview questions</td>
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108
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Appendix 1: Summary of Frameworks Used (please see page below)

Please click here to return to chapter 4.1, Please click here to return to chapter 4.2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Framework Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Defining Competencies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACRL</td>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>Authority Is Constructed and Contextual</td>
<td>define different types of authority, such as subject expertise (e.g., scholarship), societal position (e.g., public office or title), or special experience (e.g., participating in a historic event); use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility; understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of well-known scholars and publications that are widely considered “standard,” and yet, even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those sources; recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types; acknowledge they are developing their own authoritative voices in a particular area and recognize the responsibilities this entails, including seeking accuracy and reliability, respecting intellectual property, and participating in communities of practice; understand the increasingly social nature of the information ecosystem where authorities actively connect with one another and sources develop over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACRL</td>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>Information Creation as a Process</td>
<td>articulate the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes; assess the fit between an information product’s creation process and a particular information need; articulate the traditional and emerging processes of information creation and dissemination in a particular discipline; recognize that information may be perceived differently based on the format in which it is packaged; recognize the implications of information formats that contain static or dynamic information;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
monitor the value that is placed upon different types of information products in varying contexts;

transfer knowledge of capabilities and constraints to new types of information products;

develop, in their own creation processes, an understanding that their choices impact the purposes for which the information product will be used and the message it conveys.

give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation;

understand that intellectual property is a legal and social construct that varies by culture;

articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, fair use, open access, and the public domain;

understand how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information;

recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources;

declare where and how their information is published;

understand how the commodification of their personal information and online interactions affects the information they receive and the information they produce or disseminate online;

make informed choices regarding their online actions in full awareness of issues related to privacy and the commodification of personal information.

formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting, information;

determine an appropriate scope of investigation;

deal with complex research by breaking complex questions into simple ones, limiting the scope of investigations;

use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry;
### ACRL Frame: Scholarship as Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monitor gathered information and assess for gaps or weaknesses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organize information in meaningful ways;</td>
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<tr>
<td>synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources;</td>
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<tr>
<td>draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis and interpretation of information.</td>
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### ACRL Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration

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<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cite the contributing work of others in their own information production;</td>
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<tr>
<td>contribute to scholarly conversation at an appropriate level, such as local online community, guided discussion, undergraduate research journal, conference presentation/poster session;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues;</td>
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<tr>
<td>critically evaluate contributions made by others in participatory information environments;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the contribution that particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summarize the changes in scholarly perspective over time on a particular topic within a specific discipline;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize that a given scholarly work may not represent the only - or even the majority - perspective on the issue.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>determine the initial scope of the task required to meet their information needs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, who might produce information about a topic and then determine how to access that information;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) and convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>match information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand how information systems (i.e., collections of recorded information) are organized in order to access relevant information;</td>
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<td>SCONUL Pillar</td>
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Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZIL</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
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</table>
|       | Standard 1 | The information literate person recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed | defines and articulates the information need  
understands the purpose, scope and appropriateness of a variety of information  
re-evaluates the nature and extent of the information need  
uses diverse sources of information to inform decisions  |
| ANZIL | Standard 2 | The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently | selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information  
constructs and implements effective search strategies  
obeys rules for using electronic sources  
keeps up to date with information sources, information technologies, information access tools and investigative methods  |
| ANZIL | Standard 3 | The information literate person critically evaluates information and the information seeking process | assesses the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained  
defines and applies criteria for evaluating information  
reflects on the information seeking process and revises search strategies as necessary  |
| ANZIL | Standard 4 | The information literate person manages information collected or generated | records information and its sources  
organises (orders/classifies/stores) information  |
| ANZIL | Standard 5 | The information literate person applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings | compares and integrates new understandings with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information  
communicates knowledge and new understandings effectively  |
| ANZIL | Standard 6 | The information literate person uses information with | acknowledges cultural, ethical, and socioeconomic issues related to access to, and use of, information  |
understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
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<tr>
<td>recognises that information is underpinned by values and beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>conforms with conventions and etiquette related to access to, and use of, information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2; TFIL’s IL terms of reference

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Appendix 3; Interview Questions and Format

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Re. Trainee Teachers...

- Can you tell me a little about your library and the services it provides for the students intending to pursue a career in teaching?
- Could you tell me about any initiatives your library has taken to provide IL training? Have these courses been on a voluntary basis or embedded into course work?
- Among the students that are intending to teach, do you keep user statistics? How do they compare to other students?
- Do you think the trainee teachers would benefit from access to an IL module and if so, what format should it take?
- Can you comment on what you perceive the IL levels of HDip graduates to be?

Re. Qualified Teachers...

- When I hold my focus groups of teachers I expect to find that teachers are not aware of the concept of IL, even though they teach all of the competencies. Can you comment on this?
- In first year of college, students have been found to be less competent in using library services than would be expected (however they generally rate themselves to be much more information literate than they actually are). Do you think that if school teachers were aware of IL that this gap would be mediated to some extent?
- While delving into this topic I have come to the opinion that if teachers were to teach IL as a subject it would strengthen student skills and also perhaps ease pressure on syllabus content, for example the IL skills could be taught and then each subject be examined with reference to that skill. Can you give an opinion on this?

Policy...

- Could you tell me, from your point of view, what you feel are the major strengths and flaws in the Irish education system?
- LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE, The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 does not refer to the phrase ‘Information Literacy’. If the document contains all of the IL competencies, do you think it is relevant that the phrase is left out?
- In your opinion, at what level should students be introduced to IL as a concept?

Finally,...

- Do you have any further thoughts or comments on this topic?
- Do you wish to remain anonymous on behalf of yourself or your college?
Appendix 4; Proposed Secondary School

Please click here to return to text.
Appendix 5; The Population

Please click here to return to text.
Appendix 6: The Local Library

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Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Appendix 7; Email Correspondence Confirming Interviews

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Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
Appendix 8; Focus Group Format and Discussion Prompts

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Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

What is IL?

Figure 2: Information literacy elements
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
How to Use IL

https://vimeo.com/nccq/review/109252713/efectna2d4liz0

The Thesis

Mapping Project
Interviews
Focus Groups
"I suppose the notion that you have to remember tons and tons of information, and that’s by rote, problem solving and critical thinking are gone, out the window. They are addressing this with the junior cert, looking at the assessment, portfolios. I think it cannot be just about one big exam, that plans the rest of your life."
Interview Results

“...a lot of the students that do teaching, they seem to be hand fed. They’re given what they need to find, I think, I didn’t say earlier, I don’t think they are as information literate as the others, possibly, the humanity students.”

Questions (re. 3rd level training);

* Prior to this introduction, were any of you familiar with the concept of IL?
* Heard the phrase?
* Know what it means?
Questions (re. 3rd level training);

* Can anybody recall any library or IL training received in college?
* Was it useful?
* Emphasis on point of need or lifelong learning?

Questions (re. the teaching profession);

* Have you encountered any CPD courses based around information skills?
* Have you encountered the phrase IL in your professional practise to date?
Questions (re. the teaching profession);

- Do you have support from a school librarian?
- Relationship with local public librarian?
- Is there any potential for collaboration here?
- Is anybody aware here of the Maynooth Outreach Project?

Questions (re. the teaching profession);

- Are any of the following ever incorporated into a class plan;
  - Information seeking
  - Critical assessment
  - Ethics (copyright/plagiarism)?

- Do you have any awareness of information seeking behaviour in the delivery of your lessons?
Questions (re. the teaching profession);

* To what extent do the curriculum outcomes influence your lesson plan?

* Are the curriculum outcomes measurable as per the outcomes in the IL frameworks?

Questions (re. the teaching profession);

* Do you see a use for the framework to be incorporated informally into your class activities?
Questions (re. the teaching profession):

* If IL were to be incorporated formally into the curriculum; where do you feel it would fit?

* Pedagogic options for delivery; videos/brief introduction over a small number of lessons/embedded into all course work?

Questions (re. policy):

* Is the term IL important if all of the skills are taught across the syllabus?
Questions (re. policy)

* Do you think that the Dept of Education is aware if IL as a transferable skillset in its own right?

* Can anybody think of a reason as to why the term is not publicised by the Irish Government?

Questions (re. policy)

* Does the group feel that if the skillset was taught in a core module that it may ease the pressure in some aspects of teaching?
Questions (re. policy)

* Do you think that strict adherence to the curriculum would allow the (average) student to achieve the following;
* Identification of an information need
* Self directed learning
* Critical assessment

Thank You
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
Appendix 9: Gantt chart

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### Appendix 10; Mapping Exercise;

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Primary Level English

[Back to Findings](#)

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<th>Strand Unit</th>
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<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
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<td>Emotional and imaginative</td>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Emotional and imaginative development through oral language</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>development through language</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>language</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>responding to text</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>developing emotional and imaginative life through writing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. No link to framework; basic literacy skills
2. Skill to "retell"; tentative link to Scholarship as Conversation
3. Skill to "retell"; tentative link to Present
4. Skill to "retell" Standard 5; communicates knowledge and new understandings effectively
5. Skill to "express and communicate reactions" and "give constructive responses to writing"; elements of Scholarship as Conversation
6. Skill to "express and communicate reactions" and "give constructive responses to writing"; tentative link to Evaluate
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

7  Skill to "express and communicate reactions" and "give constructive responses to writing"; tentative link to Standard 5 and 6
8  Skill to develop Language Structure & Oral communication in various settings; Basic literacy, no link to frameworks
   Skill to "participate in organised visits to the public
   library and avail of the mobile library
   service"; tentative link to Searching as Strategic Exploration
9  Tentative link to Present
10 Skill of understanding through expression; tentative link to Scholarship as Conversation
11 Skill of understanding through expression; tentative link to Evaluate and Present
12 Skill of understanding through expression; tentative link to Standard 5
13 Skill to "recall" and "retell"; basic literacy skills, creating links with information read in the context of prior experiences (within Standard 5)
14 Basic Literacy and cognitive development
15 Skill to express responses “and "discuss ideas, personal responses and concerns"; tentative link to Evaluate
16 Skill to "express responses" and "discuss ideas, personal responses and concerns"; tentative link to Standard 3
17 Skill of "experience and enjoy playful aspects of language experimenting with sequences of words"; basic literacy skills
18 Skill to express one's self through writing; tentative link to Information Creation as a Process
19 Skill to express one's self through writing; tentative link to Evaluate and Present
20 Skill to express one's self through writing; tentative link to Standard 5
### Primary Level Science

Back to Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Development</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>ACRL</th>
<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working scientifically</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating and experimenting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimating and measuring</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sorting and classifying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognising patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreting</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording and communicating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing and making</td>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Skill of asking questions to "identify problems to be solved" and "questions that will help in drawing conclusions and interpreting information"; link to Research as Inquiry
2. Skill of asking questions to "identify problems to be solved" and "questions that will help in drawing conclusions and interpreting information"; link to Identify and Evaluate
3. Skill of asking questions to "identify problems to be solved" and "questions that will help in drawing conclusions and interpreting information"; tentative link to Standard 1 'determines the nature and extent of information needed.'
4. Skill of "offer[ing] suggestions (hypotheses) based on a number of observations and data available" link to Information Creation as a Process
Skill of "offering suggestions (hypotheses) based on a number of observations and data available" link to Scope, Gather and Evaluate

Skill of "offering suggestions (hypotheses) based on a number of observations and data available"; embedded in Standard 5

This is the first instance of critical thinking observed during this project; this skill is embedded in Research as Inquiry and Searching as Strategic Exploration

Three IL competencies referred to within the outcomes listed under this heading; Identify, Plan, collect (ie. Gather)

Skill "to collect and record data on..."; link to Information Creation as Process

Skill "to collect and record data on..."; link to Identify and Scope

Skill "to collect and record data on..."; link to Standard 2, 'selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information'

Skill "sort and group data " and "sort and present data "; links with Gather, Evaluate and Manage

Skill "sort and group data " and "sort and present data "; embedded in Standard 4 'orders/ classifies/ stores information'

Link to Gather and Present

Skills of "Interpreting" and "Drawing Conclusions" precisely correlate to Research as Inquiry; 'draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis and interpretation of information'

Skills of "Interpreting" and "Drawing Conclusions" pertain to Gather and Evaluate

Skills of "Interpreting" and "Drawing Conclusions" are embedded within Standard 3; 'critically evaluates information' but does not correspond to '... and the information seeking process'.

Skills of "Recording and Communicating" correlate directly with the Present Pillar

Skills of "Recording and Communicating" has links with Standard 4; managing information collected or generated

Tentative links with all searching IL competencies, however, no direct links

Planning skill; tentative link with Research as Inquiry 'determine an appropriate scope of investigation'

Planning skill; obvious, but somewhat tentative/ simplistic link with Plan

Skills to "appraise results against group's initial plan and intentions"; tentative link Scholarship as Conversation; recognising a given work may not represent the only perspective on the issue.

Evaluate; direct correlation with Evaluate pillar

Evaluate; direct correlation with Standard 3 'critically evaluates information' but does not correspond to the evaluation of '... the information seeking process' element of this competency.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Junior Certificate Level English

[Back to Findings]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>ACRL</th>
<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language</td>
<td>Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer</td>
<td>Know and use the conventions of oral language interaction, in a variety of contexts, including class groups, for a range of purposes, such as asking for information, stating an opinion, listening to others, informing, explaining, arguing, persuading, criticising, commentating, narrating, imagining, speculating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Engage actively and responsively within class groups in order to listen to or recount experiences and to express feelings and ideas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Engage in extended and constructive discussion of their own and other students’ work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen actively in order to get the gist of an account or presentation noting its main points and purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver a short oral text, alone and/or in collaboration with others, using appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learn from and evaluate models of oral language use to enrich their own oral language production</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choose appropriate language, style and visual content for specific audiences and chosen purposes: persuading, informing, narrating, describing a process</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen actively in order to interpret meaning, compare, evaluate effectiveness of, and respond to drama, poetry, overall impact in a systematic way media broadcasts, digital media, noting key ideas, style, tone and content</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Apply what they have learned about the effectiveness of spoken texts to their own use of oral language

Collaborate with others in order to explore and discuss understandings of spoken texts by recording, analysing, interpreting and comparing their opinions

Engage with the world of oral language use as a pleasurable and purposeful activity

Know how to use language resources (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus and online resources) in order to assist their vocabulary development

Identify and comment on features of English at word and sentence level using appropriate terminology, showing how such features contribute to overall effect

Understand how word choice, syntax, grammar and text structure may vary with context and purpose

Appreciate a variety of registers and understand their use in the written context

Read texts with fluency, understanding and competence, decoding groups of words/phrases and not just single words

Read for a variety of purposes: learning, pleasure, research, comparison

Use a wide range of reading comprehension strategies appropriate to texts, including digital texts: to retrieve information; to link to previous knowledge, follow a process or argument, summarise, link main ideas; to monitor their own understanding; to question, analyse, synthesise and evaluate

Use an appropriate critical vocabulary while responding to literary texts
Exploring and using language

Engage in sustained private reading as a pleasurable and purposeful activity, applying what they have learned about the effectiveness of spoken and written texts to their own experience of reading.

Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure.

Select key moments from their texts and give thoughtful value judgements on the main character, a key scene, a favourite image from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event.

Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author’s choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text.

Identify, appreciate and compare the ways in which different literary, digital and visual genres and sub-genres shape texts and shape the reader’s experience of them.

Know how to use language resources (e.g. dictionary, thesaurus and online resources) in order to assist their vocabulary development.

Identify and comment on features of English at word and sentence level using appropriate terminology, showing how such features contribute to overall effect.

Understand how word choice, syntax, grammar and text structure may vary with context and purpose.
**Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate a variety of registers and understand their use in the written context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss their own and other students’ written work constructively and with clear purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write for a variety of purposes, for example to analyse, evaluate, imagine, explore, engage, amuse, narrate, inform, explain, argue, persuade, criticise, comment on what they have heard, viewed and read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write competently in a range of text forms, for example letter, report, multi-modal text, review, blog, using appropriate vocabulary, tone and a variety of styles to achieve a chosen purpose for different audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with and learn from models of oral and written language use to enrich their own written work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use editing skills continuously during the writing process to enhance meaning and impact: select vocabulary, reorder words, phrases and clauses, correct punctuation and spelling, reorder paragraphs, remodel, manage content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond imaginatively in writing to their texts showing a critical appreciation of language, style and content, choice of words, language patterns, tone, images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write about the effectiveness of key moments from their texts commenting on characters, key scenes, favourite images from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploring and using language</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 5 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Understanding the Content and Structure of Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in the writing process as a private, pleasurable and</td>
<td>Engage in the writing process as a private, pleasurable and purposeful activity and using a personal voice as their individual style is thoughtfully developed over the years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purposeful activity and using a personal voice as their individual</td>
<td>Use and apply their knowledge of language structures, for example sentence structure, paragraphing, grammar, to make their writing a richer experience for themselves and the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>style is thoughtfully developed over the years</td>
<td>Use language conventions appropriately, especially punctuation and spelling, to aid meaning and presentation and to enhance the reader’s experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use and apply their knowledge of language structures, for</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of how syntax, grammar, text structure and word choice may vary with context and purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>example sentence structure, paragraphing, grammar, to make their</td>
<td>Evaluate their own writing proficiency and seek remedies for those aspects of their writing that they need to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing a richer experience for themselves and the reader</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Junior Certificate Level Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>ACRL</th>
<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding about science</td>
<td>appreciate how scientists work and how scientific ideas are modified over time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recognise questions that are appropriate for scientific investigation, pose testable hypotheses, and evaluate and compare strategies for investigating hypotheses</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>design, plan and conduct investigations; explain how reliability, accuracy, precision, fairness, safety, ethics, and the selection of suitable equipment have been considered</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>produce and select data (qualitatively/quantitatively), critically analyse data to identify patterns and relationships, identify anomalous observations, draw and justify conclusions</td>
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<td>review and reflect on the skills and thinking used in carrying out investigations, and apply their learning and skills to solving problems in unfamiliar contexts.</td>
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<td>conduct research relevant to a scientific issue, evaluate different sources of information including secondary data, understanding that a source may lack detail or show bias</td>
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<td>organise and communicate their research and investigative findings in a variety of ways fit for purpose and audience, using relevant scientific terminology and representations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>evaluate media-based arguments concerning science and technology.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Back to Findings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science in society</th>
<th>Research and present information on the contribution that scientists make to scientific discovery and invention, and its impact on society.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciate the role of science in society; and its personal, social and global importance; and how society influences scientific research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building blocks</td>
<td>Describe the relationships between various celestial objects including moons, asteroids, comets, planets, stars, solar systems, galaxies and space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explore a scientific model to illustrate the origin of the universe.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpret data to compare the Earth with other planets and moons in the solar system, with respect to properties including mass, gravity, size, and composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth and space</td>
<td>Develop and use a model of Earth-Sun-Moon system to describe predictable phenomena observable on Earth, including seasons, lunar phases, and eclipses of the Sun and the Moon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems and interactions</td>
<td>Describe the cycling of matter, including that of carbon and water, associating it with biological and atmospheric phenomena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Research different energy sources; formulate and communicate an informed view of ways that current and future energy needs on Earth can be met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Illustrate how earth processes and human factors influence Earth’s climate, evaluate effects of climate change and initiatives that attempt to address those effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building blocks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemical world</td>
<td>examine some of the current hazards and benefits of space exploration and discuss the future role and implications of space exploration in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>investigate whether mass is unchanged when chemical and physical changes take place</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>develop and use models to describe the atomic nature of matter; demonstrate how they provide a simple way to account for the conservation of mass, changes of state, physical change, chemical change, mixtures, and their separation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>describe and model the structure of the atom in terms of the nucleus, protons, neutrons and electrons; comparing mass and charge of protons neutrons and electrons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classify substances as elements, compounds, mixtures, metals, non-metals, solids, liquids, gases and solutions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>use the Periodic Table to predict the ratio of atoms in compounds of two elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems and interactions</td>
<td>investigate the properties of different materials including solubilities, conductivity, melting points and boiling points</td>
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<td>investigate the effect of a number of variables on the rate of chemical reactions including the production of common gases and biochemical reactions</td>
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<td>investigate reactions between acids and bases; use indicators and the pH scale.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>consider chemical reactions in terms of energy, using the terms exothermic, endothermic and activation energy, and use simple energy profile diagrams to illustrate energy changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical world</td>
<td>Biological world</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Building blocks</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Systems and interactions</strong></td>
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### Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conduct a habitat study; research and investigate the adaptation, competition and interdependence of organisms within specific habitats and communities</td>
<td>evaluate how humans can successfully conserve ecological biodiversity and contribute to global food production; appreciate the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate how human health is affected by: inherited factors and environmental factors including nutrition; lifestyle choices; examine the role of micro-organisms in human health.</td>
<td>explain how humans can successfully conserve ecological biodiversity and contribute to global food production; appreciate the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe respiration and photosynthesis as both chemical and biological processes; investigate factors that affect respiration and photosynthesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>explain how matter and energy flow through ecosystems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>explain human sexual reproduction; discuss medical, ethical, and societal issues</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Skills relating to Information Creation as a Process 'articulate the traditional and emerging processes of information creation'.
2. Skills relating to Standard 5 'compares and integrates new understandings with prior knowledge to determine the value added'.
3. Skills relating to Information Creation as a Process 'articulate the capabilities and constraints of information' and Research as Inquiry; Skills to "recognise questions that are appropriate for scientific investigation" relate strongly to 'determine an appropriate scope of investigation'.
4. Skill of "recognising questions" relates to Identify and Scope, the skill of "design, plan and conduct investigations" relates to Plan, the skill of "produce and select data" relates to Gather, the skill of "produce and select data" relates to Manage and Evaluate.
5. Skill of "recognise questions that are appropriate" relates to Standard 1 'defines and articulates the information need' Standard 3, 4 and 5 are also referred to.
6. Skills of "Communicating in science" mostly relate to basic literacy skills within the field.
7. Skills in "Science in society" relate to Information has Value 'give credit to the original idea of others'.
8. Skills within "Science in society" relate tentatively to Standard 6 'recognises that information is underpinned by values and beliefs'.
Skills of research correlates directly with Research as Inquiry, skills to "formulate and communicate" relates tentatively to Scholarship as Conversation
Skills to "formulate and communicate an informed view" relate strongly to Evaluate and Present
Skills to "formulate and communicate an informed view" relate strongly to Standard 3, the skill to "an informed view of ways that current and future energy needs on Earth can be met" correlates directly with Standard 6 'uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural ethical, economic, legal and social issues'
Skills to "describe and model" relate to Present
Skills of investigating reactions and properties and effects relate to Information Creation as a Process and Research as Inquiry and tentatively to Scholarship as Conversation
IL competency of Evaluate directly quoted
Skill of Evaluate directly correlates with Standard 3
Skills of "identify and measure/calculate" relate tentatively to Research as Enquiry as these lessons lay a basis for original investigation
Skill of Identify directly quoted, IL competency of Evaluate tentatively related to with skill of appropriate tool selection
With "Systems and interactions" there is a tentative link to Information Creation as a Process and Research as Inquiry
The skill to "discuss a technological application of physics" relates tentatively to Standard 5 'communicates knowledge and new understandings effectively'. Standard 6 also relatable.
Skills of "design, build, and test" relate tentatively to information Creation as a Process and Research as Inquiry
Skills to "explain energy conservation" tentatively relate to Evaluate and Present as phenomena are tested and presented in various formats
Skills to "analyse processes" relate tentatively to Standard 3 'evaluating information'
Skills to "research and discuss the ethical and sustainability issues" are encompassed within Scholarship as Conversation
IL competency of Evaluate and Present is utilised to achieve this outcome
Within the element of Sustainability Standard 6 applies where 'understanding of ethical, legal and social issues' is incorporated
Skills within "Systems and interactions" under the Strand of "Biological world" relate to Research as Inquiry, Searching as Strategic Exploration
Skills within "Systems and interactions" under the Strand of "Biological world" relate to Plan, tentatively to Gather and directly to Evaluate and Present
Skills to "conduct a habitat study" relate tentatively to competencies within Standard 2 'finds needed information effectively and efficiently' and to Standard 5 'applies prior and new information to create new understanding'
Skills here relate tentatively to Research as Inquiry, the outcomes outlined lay the foundation for future scientific investigation. Skill of "explain" relates directly to Scholarship as Conversation.

The skills of Describe investigate and explain require application of the Gathering, Evaluate Manage and Present competencies. Skills to "investigate factors" correlate directly with the obtaining of information through investigative methods and access tools component of Standard 2. Standard 3, 4 and 6 are also relevant here.

Skills to "discuss medical, ethical, and societal issues" are embedded in the Scholarship as Conversation competency. IL competency of Evaluate directly quoted, also link to Present.

Skills of evaluation in outcome relate directly to Standard 3, Standard 5 and Standard 6 also relevant.
### Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Leaving Certificate Level English

#### Back to Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>ACRL</th>
<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Language of Information</strong></td>
<td>Comprehending</td>
<td>Give an account of the gist of a text.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Specify appropriate details for relevant purposes.</td>
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<td>Summarise the information they obtained from a text.</td>
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<td>Comment on the selection of facts given: evaluate the adequacy of the information and indicate omissions.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Identify the point of view of an author.</td>
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<td>Outline the values assumed in a text.</td>
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<td>Indicate the genre of a text.</td>
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<td>Comment on the language use, structure and lay-out.</td>
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<td>Records: memos, minutes, notices, precis.</td>
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<td>Letters of all kinds.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>Letters of all kinds.</td>
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<td>Reports and research projects</td>
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<td>Various media scripts and newspaper reports.</td>
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<td>Outline the stages of an argument and identify the conclusion.</td>
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<td>Identify the reasoning structure evidenced in key words or phrases e.g. therefore, because, nevertheless, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distinguish between statements/propositions and examples.</td>
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<td>Distinguish between opinion, anecdote and evidence.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the validity of an argument.</td>
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<td>Attempt to identify assumptions present.</td>
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<td>Outline the values being asserted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>Put forward a theory or hypothesis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Justify a decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Language of Persuasion</td>
<td>Comprehending</td>
<td>Attempt an overview. Identify the techniques being used to persuade e.g. tone, image, rhythm, choice of words, selection of detail. Evaluate the impact of a passage in achieving its desired effect. Indicate to which audience it is addressed. Analyse the value-system advocated and/or implied by the text. Outline whose interests it serves. Newspaper articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>Advertising copy Public relations/propaganda/political statements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Language of Narration</td>
<td>Comprehending</td>
<td>Develop an awareness of their own response to texts and analyse and justify that response. Indicate aspects of the narrative which they found significant and attempt to explain fully the meaning thus generated. Outline the structure of the narrative and how it achieves coherence within its genre. Develop an awareness of narrative characteristics of different genres and how the language in these genres is chosen and shaped to achieve certain effects. Approach narrative texts from a variety of critical viewpoints e.g. analyse and compare texts under such categories as gender, power and class and relate texts from different periods and cultures. Compare texts in different genres on the same theme. Anecdote Parable, Fable</td>
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<td>Composing</td>
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</table>
### Comprehending

#### The Aesthetic Use of Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Story</th>
<th>Autobiographical sketch</th>
<th>Scripts</th>
<th>Dialogues</th>
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</table>

Develop appropriate stances for reading and/or viewing in all literary genres. This means students should approach drama scripts from a theatrical perspective, view films as complex amalgams of images and words and read poetry conscious of its specific mode of using language as an artistic medium.

Engage in interpretative performance of texts.

Develop an awareness of their own responses, affective, imaginative, and intellectual, to aesthetic texts. Explore these responses relative to the texts read, generate and justify meanings and build coherent interpretations.

Re-read texts for encountering rich and diverse levels of suggestion, inference and meaning.

Attempt to compare and evaluate texts for the quality of the imaginative experience being presented.

Compose within the aesthetic forms encountered.

Compose "interventions", i.e. alternative scenarios based on texts studied.

Keep Response Journals - expressive of their growing acquaintance with a text over a period of time.

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<th>21</th>
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### Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Information Strand

1. Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Information Strand relates to all but one (Searching as Strategic Exploration) of the ACRL IL competencies. Some of the relationships are tentative but all are there, for example the outcome "Give an account of the gist of a text." requires the appreciation of competencies within Information Creation as a Process, Information has Value and Scholarship as Strategic Exploration.

2. Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Information Strand relates to all of the SCONUL Pillars of IL in various formats.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

3 Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Information Strand relates to Standards 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the ANZIL Framework, for example, the outcome to "evaluate the adequacy of the information and indicate omissions" relates to 'critically evaluates information' (Stage 3).

4 Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Argument Strand relate to Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation and Searching as Strategic Exploration. To have this skillset a student would need an appreciation of all of these competencies, however not all of the competencies are referred to specifically or comprehensively in the outcomes.

5 Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Argument Strand relate to Identify (directly), Scope and Evaluate.

6 Skills of Comprehending within The Language of Argument Strand relate to components of Standards 3, 5 and 6.

7 Skills of Composing within The Language of Argument Strand relate to Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation.

8 Skills of Composing within The Language of Argument Strand relate to Evaluate and Present.

9 Skills of Composing within The Language of Argument Strand relate to Standard 3, 5 and 6.

10 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Persuasion refer to Scholarship as Conversation.

11 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Persuasion refer to Identify, Scope, Gather, Evaluate and Present.

12 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Persuasion refer to Standard 3 (critically assess), Standard 5 (applies prior knowledge to new concepts) and Standard 6 (uses information with understanding).

13 Skill of Composing within The Language of Persuasion refer to the Present IL Pillar.

14 Skill of Composing within The Language of Persuasion relates directly to Standard 5 'communicates knowledge and new understandings effectively' and to Standard 6.

15 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Narration requires appreciation of Information Creation as a Process, Information has Value (tentatively) and Scholarship as Conversation (tentatively).

16 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Narration relates to Identify, Scope, Gather, Evaluate and Present.

17 Skill of Comprehending within The Language of Narration relates directly to Standard 3, 5 and 6.

18 Skill of Composing within The Language of Narration relate Information Creation as a Process.

19 Skill of Composing within The Language of Narration relate to Plan, Gather (tentatively), Evaluate and Present.

20 Skill of Composing within The Language of Narration relate to Standard 6.

21 The skill of Comprehending within The Aesthetic Use of Language is the first example of Authority is Constructed and Contextual, here students are required to analyse sources of literary genres from a structural perspective and "Develop appropriate stances". An appreciation of Information Creation as a Process is also required here.

22 Skills of Comprehending within The Aesthetic Use of Language relate to the IL Pillar Evaluate.

23 Skills of Comprehending within The Aesthetic Use of Language relates to Standard 3.

24 Skills of Composing within The Aesthetic Use of Language relates to Information Creation as a Process and Scholarship as Conversation.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

(tentatively)
25 Skills of Composing within The Aesthetic Use of Language relates to Information Creation as a Process and Scholarship as Conversation (tentatively)
26 Skills of Composing within The Aesthetic Use of Language relate to Plan, Evaluate and Present
27 Skills of Composing within The Aesthetic Use of Language relate to Standard 3, 5 and 6

Note
All outcomes regarding forming arguments and assessing opinions do not refer to finding reliable sources of information, they imply comparing statements to one’s own prior knowledge
Leaving Certificate Level Biology

Aims (of whole Syllabus)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>ACRL</th>
<th>SCONUL</th>
<th>ANZIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to contribute to students' general education through their involvement in the process of scientific investigation and the acquisition of biological knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>to encourage in students an attitude of scientific enquiry, of curiosity and self-discovery through (i) individual study and personal initiative (ii) team work (iii) class-directed work</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>to develop an understanding of biological facts and principles</td>
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<td>to enhance an interest in and develop an appreciation of the nature and diversity of organisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>to create an awareness of the application of biological knowledge to modern society in personal, social, economic, environmental, industrial, agricultural, medical, waste management and other technological contexts</td>
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<td>to develop in students an ability to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives (of whole Syllabus)</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>ACRL</td>
<td>SCONUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding and Skills</td>
<td>an ability to carry out practical work, laboratory work and fieldwork activities safely and effectively an ability to record and interpret biological data.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and Interface with Technology</td>
<td>Students should be able to apply, where possible, their knowledge and understanding of biology in environmental, industrial, agricultural, medical, waste management and other technological contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science in the Political, Social and Economic Spheres</td>
<td>Students should be able to apply, where possible, their knowledge and understanding of biology in personal, social and economic spheres and to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues.</td>
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1. The "involvement in the process [acquisition and understanding] of scientific investigation" directly correlates with all Frames within the ACRL IL Framework to some extent
2. The "involvement in the process [acquisition and understanding] of scientific investigation" directly correlates with all Pillars within the SCONUL IL Framework to some extent
3. The "involvement in the process [acquisition and understanding] of scientific investigation" directly correlates with all Standards within the ANZIL IL Framework to some extent
4. By encouraging curiosity, the Research as Inquiry frame must be drawn upon and, perhaps, Searching as Strategic Exploration
5. By encouraging curiosity students should be facilitated to use all Pillars as defined by SCONUL
6. By encouraging curiosity students should be enabled to use all aspects of the ANZIL Framework
7. This aim represents Standard 6 quite precisely
8. This aim represents the Pillar Evaluate quite precisely
9. This aim represents Standard 3 and somewhat to Standard 5 and 6

168
To carry out scientific procedure an element of the Pillar Plan and Manage is required

To carry out scientific procedure there is a tentative link to Standard 4 'manages information collected or generated'

The skills required to gain "an ability to record and interpret biological data" relates to Information Creation as a Process, Information has Value and Research as Inquiry

The skill relates to Identify, Gather and Evaluate

The skill/ outcome relates to Standard 3 'critically evaluates information'

To "Apply Knowledge", requires the competencies listed in Standard 6 of the ANZIL Framework
Appendix 11; Hibernia Interview

Please [click here](#) to return to chapter 4.1

Please [click here](#) to return to 4.3

OK, so I will show you here what I have done, and then I will ask you some questions. So first of all I did a quick copy and paste job

**OK**

And I put together all of the IL frameworks; ACRIL, SCONUL, ANZIL, this was just for ease of access for myself because, then what I did was I took some of the school curricula, primary English, primary science, junior cert English/ science and leaving cert English/ biology.

**OK, Yea**

Then I compared them, I looked at each outcome and identified whether that skill was in the frameworks. Basically every blue box is a correlation and as you can see, they are everywhere.

**Yea**

So keeping that in mind, and that we don’t think teachers have a basic understanding of the concept, and they are teaching it all day every day, it would seem, so that is what my project is based on.

Can you tell me a little about your library and the services it provides for the students intending to pursue a career in teaching?

**Ok, so it’s, primarily, an online library. So we provide electronic books, and journals and articles then. There are also other materials, dissertations and other bits and pieces, conference proceedings as well, and, particularly, in relation to teaching, is the learning tech library. Which is a collection of books, journals, conference proceedings, and what I like about it is that it relates to ICT and its impact all around the world in relation to education. In particular, for teachers it’s very important, I suppose it’s a bit like the information literacy skill, it’s something that effects everything they teach, or at least it should, at least. So that’s an additional resource I guess were pleased with. The other resource ill mention briefly would be Taylor & Francis, just from the point of view of... I am sure you are aware of the 2014 upgrade of diploma level to master’s level for the teaching programmes. So, obviously. All teachers now have to do their research/ thesis. We have to make sure our resources were upped as well in relation to that- our Ebsco databases but as well the Taylor and Francis.**

**That is all very expensive to do?**

Yes, it is but we do need to invest and provide these services in terms of the research level. I particularly like Taylor & Francis myself, that’s a humanities collection, just based on our faculty and their research, there are a lot of really good papers in there that might not be in Ebsco. Em, so that’s
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

principally what we provide. Then, obviously, we provide reading lists, in conjunction with the faculty, the lead tutors would provide reading lists, in pdf format. Down the line we’d like to do that via a software product, we are looking at options, but the main point is to get the reading list up there. And to make sure they have it for each subject that they study. It’s very important, I think, to build up the relationship there, and make sure they have what they need and that it is up to date. All that kind of thin, and just then to mention, as well as providing resources in the library we provide links say to Ebsco, as an example we could have a perma link to an article or something like that within a session or task. We use the virtual learning tool, Moodle, so it’s very interactive. We can put things like that in there. So they are the three elements we provide.

Would you be a little bit afraid that if you provide a lot of active links that nobody would ever use the library to search for resources?

There is that fear, there is that side of it, absolutely, it’s important to not give them everything. It’s important that they develop critical thinking skills and problem solving and that’s something that I don’t think is addressed you know, in a lot of cases. We have to be careful that we don’t overdo it, if they are looking for advice. Or have queries, I don’t just do things for them. I will direct them through generating a search for themselves and I think that’s something but in terms of accessibility it might help in working with the tutor a little, creating a little more engagement.

Could you tell me about any initiatives your library has taken to provide IL training? Have these courses been on a voluntary basis or embedded into course work? I know you do library training, but do you do any IL training?

There are quite a few things from my point of view, what is information Literacy? It’s being able to find the information, that’s obviously the start, and we’d always say the library is the first point of call. They need to be able to assess and find. My initial webinar is always about finding information so people know where things are, how to search, and give them the options. Say that they do need to be selective- the general google type search is good for some things but then as they drill down to their research topic, you know yourself, as you get more advanced with your searching, you might need to go into a platform directly. Because I do think that the search engines are great but you can lose some of the functionality that is required, and that is an element of IL. in that they know what headings and key words to use, and they can differ, depending on the vendor you are using. There is a whole lot of politics behind this, the students need to be aware of. That’s the first element, then there is the element of citing the material as well, so once you find the information, students need to build up a repertoire and a repository of references because I’ve had so many students, it happens to everybody from time to time; you find something that is really useful and by the time you want to use it, you’re not exactly sure where it came from. So, from my point of view, I guess I’d be sort of seen as a bit of a facilitator, in terms of, the student needs to get a reference, from, say ebrary, or Ebsco, whatever it is, into whatever referencing software they might be using. They might not be using any, but even to put it into a word document, to have a repository of sources and resources. So for example, say they want to sign in and use some of the personal features of any of those resources, they’ve got a little store of resources to look back on. That’s really important for them. In terms of referencing as well and academic writing, there would be other elements of IL. within our virtual learning environment, it’s not done by myself, but it is part of our orientation
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

training, which is about three weeks, usually at the start of the programme, and its done on line. So they would have two academic writing lessons, which would cover good practice in academic writing, it would talk a little bit about referencing, and then they also have teaching and learning assessment manager and both programmes, primary and post-primary and they would be heavily involved with them again when they start their research methods module, which is an engrained module. So down the line they would have that covered again. It’s not all library based, but it certainly covers all of those bases

I think you have may have named all of the skills, whether you name it information literacy or not?

Yes, absolutely

Among the students that are intending to teach, do you keep user statistics? How do they compare to other students? They are all aiming for teaching?

They are all aiming to be teachers, yea, we would have health sciences in the past and we would have seen a correlation in terms of, they would have use a lot more eBook titles more so than sometimes than articles because there wasn’t core texts included in that particular programme we offered. But in terms of now, it’s all teaching, so we can see. We do keep statistics, we obviously have the number of searches, the average length of a search, we also have created the top 10 queries students would enter. You can see things like ‘active learning’ come up, things like research in teacher education, ‘reading comprehension’ hat sort of thing, depending on what their subject is, their area of expertise is. But we wouldn’t have anything that would compare, we don’t have any students to compare to right now. In terms of Moodle analytics, we should probably have a little more integration with the library. We do want to make sure what we are providing is exactly what is needed. Down the line I do think we will be looking at that with our IT support. Just integrating a little bit more to find out exactly what the students are using. And that’s where the links come in. we need to look at getting those statistics and analysing those a little bit more.

Do you think the trainee teachers would benefit from access to an IL module and if so, what format should it take? Or do you maybe feel like they get all of the skills they need?

They do get it, but I do think there could be a little bit more, in terms of, we have so many additional gadgets, that we can use in terms of interactive quizzes and things like, for example, we have done one up for referencing; a quiz that they can do at the end of their orientation when they have looked at different referencing, they can look, there are a couple of different level questions included. And I think something like that would probably be good because, for me, it’s always a good way to remind students and to help them pick out the key points, that you hope they have taken from the information you have given.

And that allows you to review?

Yes, exactly, our training is constantly reviewing. When I started it used to be delivered in the afternoon on the first day when everyone was tired. We didn’t really get a whole lot from it to be honest, because they were just starting to get tired. Now we feel it is much more important to integrate it into their system when they’re starting to think about using the library. We have also initiated this year, through the library, an additional webinar, because I think the first one is sort of
an overview, letting them know where everything is. I think it’s very important to remind them about the importance of research, searching and they start worrying about the purity of materials and they start to worry about evaluating the sources more as they get more familiar with the library service. I have started doing a follow up webinar and the response so far has been quite positive. They said look, I feel more comfortable now, in researching and advanced searching now. I think that’s where the correlation is, when they start of its about where to find it and then it’s about how to find it and collate it, so that’s how wed work.

Can you comment on what you perceive the IL levels of teacher graduates to be?

I think there is a broad mix, to be honest really. When students start off with the library, I always ask them, informally, their level, have they ever used resources electronically? Have they used them maybe sometimes but they are not entirely comfortable with them? Do they use them regularly? There does tend to be answers from across the board. And I think generally as students go through the programme they have their assessments, and they will use the library. But as to what I would talk about going beyond, particularly for teachers, their ability to go out and transfer what they have learned to students and I think there will be a broad mix in that, in that some will be very confident using resources and demonstrating them, I think some students will not be. And that’s going to apply across the board, and I think we need to be aware of it as well, you know, some students will have a difficulty with the resources and transferring the skill and that’s where we need to look a little bit more, and even tailor the training maybe for these students.

With regards to qualified teachers...

When I hold my focus groups of teachers I expect to find that teachers are not aware of the concept of IL, even though they teach all of the competencies. Can you comment on this? Do you think it is suitable for them to be teaching the competencies when they are not aware of the skillset as a concept?

They may have maybe heard of the term, but what I learned, was, at the seminar the last day, you heard the wonderful talk that Professor Devlin gave on information literacy. Even within that, I think we as librarians, have different concepts. I think everyone has a different idea what it actually means and I think students are no different, so, they probably don’t understand the term as fully as they should and as you said, they are teaching it, so there needs to be a refocus on where they are introduced it and they need to have some sort of definition in their heads, particularly, as teachers. That’s how they are going to change the future of education of other students, and get them in the mode of I.e. think it should be a life-long, I don’t think it should be something that is delivered at a particular time.

In first year of college, students have been found to be less competent in using library services than would be expected (however they generally rate themselves to be much more information literate than they actually are). Do you think that if school teachers were aware of IL that this gap would be mediated to some extent?

Yea I do, if they were aware, it would start addressing those skills in primary and secondary school. Students, coming in, believe that because they have various digital devices on hand and they can use them so, they are literate. This is where the digital literacy comes in, which, in my opinion is a
dangerous term to use because it shouldn’t really take away from information literacy. Its information, regardless of the format, and that’s my opinion. And I really really feel that the students have- you agree- they totally think they can do more than they can, and we just need to refocus and they need to start from scratch in a lot of cases. But certainly the school teachers, its back to the core thing- they can address it, no matter what age they are teaching at, and then, if this is a problem, and they are teaching it, it’s a kind of circle.

I think that sometimes older teachers aren’t so confident with the technologies and they feel that maybe the students are a step ahead of them, maybe they are not confident in bringing things back to actual information skills?

Absolutely, and that’s where the ICT comes in again, while it shouldn’t just be about teaching technology/IT in the school it should be integrated across all of the subjects, there are so much along the lines of electronic resources out there, if teachers are happy with it they can transfer that to the students.

While delving into this topic I have come to the opinion that if teachers were to teach IL as a subject it would strengthen student skills and also perhaps ease pressure on syllabus content, for example the IL skills could be taught and then each subject be examined with reference to that skill. Can you give an opinion on this? You already have!

For me, for the type of job I do is; ICT is integrated into the library subjects as such, it doesn’t change the core fact of the library, so if you are talking about the information literacy, that’s treated, I suppose, as ICT, integrated across the whole thing, which would make for a different focus which, I think, would be great.

Those two phrases are really popular at the moment digital literacy and ICT; IL isn’t making its way in there.

Absolutely

With regards to policy...

Could you tell me, from your point of view, what you feel are the major strengths and flaws in the Irish education system?

Ok, well, there is a huge number of highly capable trainee teachers coming in and there are a huge number of graduates being churned out of all institutions across Ireland, that’s one of the key strengths. And that need feed into the schools, and for me, that means CPD, I think is crucial for teachers, they do get some recognition, but it does need to be a continual thing and it needs to be easy for them to get access to CPD and any of the courses that are available are crucial for keeping the skills going.

I know that primary school teachers are quite good at getting their CPD because they get their course days, is it the same for the secondary school teachers?

Em, there is some element of that, various colleges are running courses as well that students can enlist on, and also will list credits that they can get, and certificates and things like that. It is
improving. Curriculums are being looked at in both programmes, it is something that will come into focus even more than it has, because there is a discrepancy, the older teachers may feel less confident and in some cases they would need to participate more so.

In terms of weakness I guess, probably the first thing I’d say, in terms of teachers, the levels of Irish and the way Irish is integrated into the curriculum, in the sense that there is history of you have to have Irish, if you want a civil service job or if you want to teach, that element has stayed a little bit. The approach to Irish because, it is our national language but the percentage of students and teachers that are confident with it. And the way in which its taught- it’s still a huge prerequisite in terms of teacher training, and the teachers, from what I’ve come across, they’ve really enjoyed their time in the Gaeltacht, they really enjoy sharing the knowledge, building on their Irish, but then, students when they are doing it in primary school, they have to do it, that’s the first thing, then when they get out, we will have to see the census results this time round; that’s the age group that has the highest percentage of speaking Irish because they have to speak it. How many of them in the older age group are actually comfortable teaching it? People say to me- am sorry I let my Irish go. When you go abroad people say- you are Irish but you don’t speak Irish to each other? And you have to start explaining it. It is very much, a curriculum based thing and the other thing I’ll say is a weakness; the leaving cert. I suppose the notion that you have to remember tons and tons of information, and that’s by rota, problem solving and critical thinking are gone, out the window. They are addressing this with the junior cert, looking at the assessment, portfolios, I think, it cannot be just about one big exam, that plans the rest of your life. In terms of student ability, some are not set up for that type of exam, and can feel like a hugely pressurised environment for them. There is something being done, but there does certainly, need to be more.

I think you probably have a good perspective from here

LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE, The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 does not refer to the phrase ‘Information Literacy’. If the document contains all of the IL competencies, do you think it is relevant that the phrase is left out?

I don’t think it should be left out, I think it should be in there because this is a document that primarily, teachers are going to be looking at. I mean, its recommended in all of the teaching programmes, so if teachers are looking at it they need to have a definition of some type, as early as possible, into their study so that they can as you say- they are going to be teaching these competencies but they have to know what it is they are doing. It’s an umbrella term, I think it gets used too much, and it’s not understood properly. There’s this whole diversity about what it does mean, in that particular programme you mention, there should be a definition of it certainly. As you say- this is where you are identifying it and going forward and saying, right, these are the things that are important for primary school education. But certainly, there has to be an agreed definition. Even if it’s with primary level, post primary, then beyond. It has to be a life-long learning thing, certainly, and it needs to be identified in that document I would say.

In Wales and Scotland, they have laid out frameworks and definitions of IL by level, you have escribed, at a glance they are very easy to follow.
Yes

In your opinion, at what level should students be introduced to IL as a concept?

As a concept, I’d say first year of secondary school. Because I think the junior cert has changed to a point where you can have this group and these assessments, that’s an ideal place to debate, why not introduce it to them there, with the hope that by the time they make it up, there will be a slight change in the leaving cert. I don’t think I would put it in any sooner, although, when you get to first year they could actually say- all the things you have done from primary level; reading, comprehension, learning good practise, you have been doing it. Now this is what it means and you can start moving forward with it in a new concept and being able to discuss it more I think. Hugely important.

Oh, you have convinced me I think, I would have said earlier but you have convinced me absolutely!

Do you have any further thoughts or comments on this topic?

Only to reiterate, for me, it would certainly be life-long learning. People can debate when it be introduced as a concept, but it should be core from the beginning. Even parents can start thinking about it, if they are aware of it as well, you know, you have all of these websites where you can have, you have them all over the world, forums and discussion forums for parents, and free resources for them to have a look at. It’s a great way of getting to early childhood education, and getting to parents, why not start it from the beginning? Everybody will be on the same page, eventually, hopefully. Even for parents of children with dyslexia or autism, places parents go for advice, and obviously they always say- this is not medical advice from a doctor. Just for parents to share their experiences. And something like that, that is not medically dependant on critical information, as a concept, I think it would be great to start parents talking about it as well. They are obviously the initial educators, that’s really the main thing I think I would say.

Thank you very much, do you wish to remain anonymous on behalf of yourself or your college?

No, I don’t think so, I think its fine.
Appendix 12; St Patrick’s Interview

Please click here to return to chapter 4.1, please click here to return to chapter 4.3.

OK, well I will show you really quickly what I have done, first off what I did was I gathered up the three frameworks that I was going to use; ACRL, SCONUL and ANZIL, and I summarised them on this table. Then I took the curricula from primary school English and science, junior cert English and science and leaving cert English and biology, and I compared them. I looked at the outcomes, and every time there was a correlation I recorded it on a table, so every blue box you see is where an IL competency appears in an outcome. It is a very long document! The crux of the matter is that all of the skills are in there. With that in mind I would like to ask some questions;

Can you tell me a little about your library and the services it provides for the students intending to pursue a career in teaching?

Well, we were talking about this earlier- we don’t really teach students any differently, because they want to be a teacher. But what we did do, for the year 15/16, we started off with a library induction for first year under grads, we had an hour with them, and we divided the induction into two parts; 30-minute presentation, we provided information to them, told them all of the services that we provided, we showed them how to look and search for a book, and how to look for databases, and showed them how to use summon [library search system] as well. And then for the second part of that induction, we did a treasure hunt. There were too many students to give them a tour, there was about 220 in each...

Ye- so the B.Ed’s would be our largest group. You know that Pats was traditionally a teacher training college, and now it has moved so that we offer B.A.’s and other degrees you can do outside of that. Additional courses. So those groups would be huge.

And was this course compulsory or was it optional?

So this was the first year that we, the library, was a part of the overall college orientation, so they thought they had to attend. But they didn’t have to but they did, you know yourself. So we did a treasure hunt for the final 30m minutes, in which we asked them to find a book on the shelf, find an important are in the library- so for example the service office, the special collections, the self-issue machine things like that- things that were important for them to find in the library, and then we also got them to connect with us on social media. So we asked them to take a picture of themselves, say outside the Shiel Office, and ‘like’ us, we created a hashtag as well. So the idea for that would be they would already be engaged with us on the social media.

That’s a really good idea

Ye- so that was the library orientation. Here there is a drop in centre as well, for students who have quick questions about starting their research, if they don’t know where to start, they come in here. We open from 9am to 5pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and then Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 10 pm. A lot of part time students who are working as teachers come in on those nights, which is great. If we find a student has a really long query, we ask them to make an appointment with us so
that they have an hour with us. We also do workshops, throughout the year. Mainly, how to avoid plagiarism and using Refworks. Refworks is pretty big.

It seems to be the most popular one, so we would stress that you need to cite, it is a subscription referencing service that is provided by the college.

We also have an education senior library assistant and, from, throughout the year, lecturers get in contact with her, and bring classes in. and she shows the class the teaching and children’s collection, which is on the first floor. She generally picks out important books, things like that. She is the first point of contact when it comes to the teaching side of things.

Academic buy in is very important, I wonder if she finds the same faces each year who is interacting with her?

Ye- we actually find that as well, at the start of the year we contacted all the lecturers because we have only been here for one year. So we contacted all the lecturers, introduced ourselves and asked them to engage with us and to bring their classes in. we didn’t hear back from many but the few that had contacted us have come back to us throughout the year. One of the women organised a Refworks class with you, I was working on Lib-guides. I was in the process of creating subject guides for them and she was one of the only ones who actually engaged with us.

OK

We’re finding that difficult but slowly but surely we are generating advocates for the library. So we also do online support. For Lib-guides we have teaching topics which are used quite heavily by the students. So Victoria, the SLA, creates all the teaching topics, she has a huge amount and then she contacts lecturers when she feels that something would be really relevant. She did a piece on 1916 this year and that was used a lot. We do tours as well, at the start of the year and whenever a new group comes in. courses start randomly throughout the year, we had an induction yesterday.

Had you?

Yes, these are all teachers and they want to be enjoying their summer! Ye- we do tours throughout the year. Have I missed anything?

No I think that’s it, there’s other things, like library things like that. But a lot of the classes we give are very practical. So they are where you should start your research, what databases you should use, we go into elements of IL like looking at google scholar, as a more, kind of, popular source, and subscription databases and that, but it’s generally very...

You have to address those things ...

So we are very much about point of need rather than embedded.

At the start of the year, whenever we do inductions, we acknowledge the fact that we are going to throw a lot of information at the students but, if they can remember one thing- that is that our door is always open, we want to make their lives easier as students. Because a lot of them go out on
teaching practise a lot and they do have quite a heavy workload, so we want to make their lives easier. We get a lot of students engaging with us.

Mm a lot of them are drop in’s actually, which we do encourage.

You have answered my second question, so I will skip along; Among the students that are intending to teach, do you keep user statistics? How do they compare to other students?

The central courses, which are a direct route into teaching, and then there are other ones which are a roundabout way. So most of them do relate to teaching. Research, and those sorts of masters, PhD’s where people may not be going into the traditional primary school teaching. But actually, we do just treat them as one.

And do you think they act as one?

Em, no, a difference between the students, so, a lot of the students that do teaching, they seem to be hand-fed. They’re given what they need to find, I think, I didn’t say earlier, I don’t think they are as information literate as the others, possibly, the humanity students.

Maybe their course is a little more like an extension of school than like a college course?

Exactly. Ye, it seems that they are just doing the minimum to get what they have to do done, there doesn’t seem to be an encouragement of fostering lifelong learning. Whereas with the humanities they seem to really throw them into the deep end.

I wonder why that is, I wonder if the teachers are just aiming for a very specific goal, they know what they are aiming for?

I would find that some of the lecturers are more aware of that as an issue and say, one of the lecturers who is very engaged wanted the students to be more independent, to be able to think critically, to look for information themselves, to be able to use refworks, but I don’t know that all of them think like that.

So it’s kind of getting them on board and teaching them the independence. I would have thought that- it used to be a three year course and they have made it a four-year course- they would have kind of done something a little bit differently, but it seems they just have more time on teaching placement.

Which must not be a bad thing?

No, absolutely.

So we would often find, as well, because we are addressing such large groups, it’s not as easy to engage with the students in a session, like that, certainly not during registration and orientation. Em, but the same master’s groups, because they are smaller, they ask questions, they’re not as shy about it really, finding out what we offer. Engagement is probably better from them.

I’d say that’s the same the world over.
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

Exactly.

A lot of it is the mature students— they know and they know if they don’t know. I know one of your questions pokes at that but the undergrads or first years are like 18 year olds. They have no idea, about the library, they don’t know what this involves.

They might be tech-savvy but in terms of evaluating information, and awareness of copyright laws and things, the social media images...

That’s a cultural thing as well, I know that DBS have experienced that some Asian students would consider quoting somebody’s work a compliment, it can be difficult to explain plagiarism to them. Do you think the trainee teachers would benefit from access to an IL module and if so, what format should it take?

I think we are quite lucky when we get them, they are 18, they are just out of secondary school, so if they are told to attend they are going to think that they need to be there. As they carry on, throughout the year they realise these courses are not compulsory, that they won’t get in trouble. In an ideal world classes would be embedded, but they have a big workload so I don’t think that is going to happen.

Can you comment on what you perceive the IL levels of teacher graduates to be?

It’s hard to gauge it.

In DCU on a whole, they did a survey with the first years and a lot of the feedback, the students felt that they were more information literate than they were. Now the term IL wasn’t used but they seem to think that they were more information literate than they actually were. I don’t think- if you have students like that they are not going to progress much more, they think that they don’t need to improve. That’s just what I think anyway.

So they would benefit, in answer to your question.

When I hold my focus groups of teachers I expect to find that teachers are not aware of the concept of IL, even though they teach all of the competencies. Can you comment on this?

I certainly found- I did a really good course that touched on the different approaches to information literacy, the different methodologies, and it was gearing librarians towards teaching. And I certainly found, that was the first time I had really taken on that term, and what we were taught, is that can be off putting to people. To say information literacy, people don’t know what it means, its difficult to have a different term for it. You can’t use computer literacy because that’s not what it is, even though it involves technology. I think that if you are using it and say immediately, this is what it means, people can say- oh I do all of that. But without explanation I think it can be unhelpful actually, so I think you have to be really careful about how you introduce it.

In first year of college, students have been found to be less competent in using library services than would be expected (however they generally rate themselves to be much more information literate than they actually are). Do you think that if school teachers were aware of IL that this gap would be mediated to some extent?
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Ye- I mean, I worked in Maynooth University, for about a year and we did an outreach programme where we went out to the schools

Ye- I’ve had a presentation on that

Yes, Elaine Behan did that. Even that was useful, because we went in for about an hour and a half at a time, and it kind of showed them. We got them questioning the concept. If teachers were aware it might mediate the gap.

While delving into this topic I have come to the opinion that if teachers were to teach IL as a subject it would strengthen student skills and also perhaps ease pressure on syllabus content, for example the IL skills could be taught and then each subject be examined with reference to that skill. Can you give an opinion on this?

I don’t think people understand how important it is actually. That it turns up in all of these reports-what kind of graduate do we want to produce, in 2020 and in 2050, and all of that lifelong learning stuff comes up, critical thinking, evaluation, all of that. But its nearly like a theory as opposed to how does it benefit our teachers. So, us, we address the point of need, so we and we want students to use our service. And I think that’s how teachers see it, why should they do it if they are overloaded with course work already and they just need their students to hit certain skills. With lifelong learning and critical skills, it’s hard to measure those things. Especially with kids that age. If you are talking about continuous assessment, like for the junior cert, as opposed to just sitting an exam at the end of the year, it makes sense that they are teaching, say for the long term, I think it would be really difficult to introduce that in primary school, and even secondary.

And also because it’s such a theoretical subject. You would have to make it relevant to each subject, it would be hard to teach it in theory. If you were to teach it, for example teach it little by little in history, in maths, in English, it would be easier to do than just say well, you are going to look for something theoretical on the internet, it’s hard to make it relevant

It makes sense that, if you were teaching a particular course, that you would be able to say- this is an appropriate source, this is a scholarly source, this is popular, but... I saw all of the work that went into planning IL classes just. And it’s incredible, what you have to do. In terms of assessment, setting up sheets, setting up groups, do you know, all of that, setting up collaboration as part of your courses, I think it would be amazing if you had the time. I’ve seen the benefits of it,

Do you think the net benefit would pay back for the effort?

Yes, once that initial effort is done, but it’s just getting all of that by the government, the Department of Education, from the teachers themselves. Is more work for them, I think it would be brilliant if it could be done, but who would take it on board and push it? I think IL is really important, but it’s hard to sell it sometimes.

I think so too, I think that all of the different definitions don’t help too?

I remember having to define it for that class, and there are like, five different parts to it, and each of those are defined differently by people, you know
With regards to policy, could you tell me, from your point of view, what you feel are the major strengths and flaws in the Irish education system?

Em, so we were talking about this earlier, it’s really difficult for us to talk about. We can talk about our own experiences - in terms of curriculum, like we were saying – it’s a very one-off exam that tests all knowledge, and that’s not fair, it doesn’t address people with different learning needs, you know like- if you had dyslexia or if you were on the spectrum, or you know, and when you hear about the lack of support that some of the kids are getting. That sort of thing is really tough. I think it could really do with a dose of IL, and that continuous assessment will really feed into that IL, but at the moment, that’s just not there.

But, even just thinking of them jumping from second level to third level, your falling completely into the deep end. We all remember, going to college, do you know Even meeting library catalogues for the first time- how do you reference? How do you... what am I looking at? Journal article? What are you talking about? So just, there is such a jump.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR LEARNING AND LIFE, The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020 does not refer to the phrase ‘Information Literacy’. If the document contains all of the IL competencies, do you think it is relevant that the phrase is left out?

We don’t really agree- you don’t think it’s needed?

I think it can be confusing if it’s not learned properly. But I do think it’s useful to band everything together, when talking about the different competencies, it’s a nice way to tie them under one. But people have to really understand what it means, otherwise it’s absolutely useless.

I think that if you introduce it in a clear way and say- you should be teaching your students how to find a source and you’re going to have to teach them to evaluate it properly. They are going to be more aware of it.

But do you think that the term is important?

Ye, I think it is important because then they know what exactly, they are doing. Instead of them not knowing what to do with all of the information that they find.

I think that it is important to characterise it and give it a name...

Ye,

In your opinion, at what level should students be introduced to IL as a concept? Do you think it would be bedlam to introduce it in school?

I think it worked really well when Maynooth were doing it in schools. I personally think that IL, the aspect of it that talks about, like goes into copyright, and things like that, but actually, they touched on, social media, personal details, branding, that kind of thing. And I think that that’s really important. It kind of terrifies me that kids are going out and using that and don’t understand how
Information Literacy Competencies and Schools’ Curricula: Investigating Teachers’ Preparedness, Attitudes and Understanding of Information Literacy in Irish Education.

the information is being used and passed on. It’s there forever, so I think that that element of IL is really important to talk about and it should happen really early. What age do they have phones at? 10?

We were talking about people who were on Twitter who were giving out a lot of opinions but don’t really realise that employers look at that later. All of that stuff is there forever, if you delete an account, it’s still there. I don’t think they understand that.

Ye, they placed huge emphasis on that in Maynooth, and we encountered a wide range of opinions, we asked them- do you think what you say now should affect your job prospects in the future. They were like- no, not at all. The fact that they don’t think it should, means they are kind of unaware of the fact that they are putting it out there.

And I just think that eternal question- why do we need librarians if we have google, that just shows a lack of understanding about the information that’s up. It’s there, but it doesn’t mean it’s right. There’s a real lack of understanding there, why should you not use Wikipedia as a source, we are laughing...

Even, it’s important to be able to say, what do I need here. I have an assignment, how do I put this together, how do I formulate a question. You know, those basic skills that will lead you, hopefully, into a great job, or being able to, I don’t know, understand legislation or to be able to be part of your community. I worked in public libraries as well, and they addressed that too, but kind of in a different way. I don’t know what school curriculums have really started addressing that at second level?

Maynooth is the only one I have heard of. Do you have any further thoughts or comments on this topic?

Not really

The naming of the thing is the really difficult part,

its called different things ...

I think the term is important, I think it’s really important that its put out there more than digital literacy,

Digital literacy is kind of an aspect of it,

But some people would say they are equal branches on a tree, rather than IL being the umbrella term, and I think maybe it can be intimidating, I think you are right. Thank you very much, do you wish to remain anonymous on behalf of yourself or your college?

No, I don’t think so, we have permission.
Appendix 13; Primary Focus Group

Please click here to return to chapter 4.1

Please click here to return to

(PowerPoint Presentation)

* Prior to this introduction, were any of you familiar with the concept of IL?
* Heard the phrase?
* Know what it means?

No, I haven’t heard the phrase before

No, I haven’t heard it before this

No

I had not heard the term ‘information literacy’ and did not know what it meant, but now I do know

So we were teaching it and we didn’t realise, but that can be said for a lot of things

Like what?

You teach things all the time that you don’t even realise you’re teaching the kids. Say something happens in the world and you start talking to the kids about it

Ye, I guess you are teaching life skills, especially with the younger ones

* Have you encountered any CPD courses based around information skills?
* Have you encountered the phrase IL in your professional practise to date?

No not explicitly, just by itself

Any courses around library skills or critiquing or...

No, there’s not actually

Most of them are curriculum based

Ye- so subject based so an English one, a PE one, a maths one

Or your classroom management one
ICT would be a big one

We would suggest that ICT is a part of IL as almost all information needs are addressed on a computer now

They really want things to be more integrated into computer skills

Towards that model of integration IL could be used as a tool, for example teach search or evaluate and then teach the subjects around these skills? Or maybe this isn’t realistic?

It probably is

I know that in the new school across the way there is no booklist for physical books, everyone has an ipad

Really?

Ye, in the secondary school, so no books, they don’t have to carry books.

It would be very difficult to make sure they were all on task, you would have to go around checking the whole time

Mmhmm (agreement)

They won’t be able to write anymore too, which is a disaster

Ipad are not good for learning to read either, kids need to be able to drag their finger across a page without it flicking around

It’s more difficult to concentrate on each word too, comprehension seems to be more difficult

This year, we brought in that their readers are all on line, I can assign them all books and then go on and look through it

Oh, how does that work? You have to have hard copy books do you?

No, they’re just doing it at home, so we have one book that we are working with in the class, then I can go online and give them access to another ebook that they can read at home with their parents on an ipad or whatever

Oh, really?

That’s good because, sometimes you send a reader home and it comes back wrecked

Then you lose one of a set...

And have to order the whole new set
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You are supposed to supplement the hard copy reading, it’s called Active Read or something, ill check it for you

Thanks

And is it working, are they reading the ebooks?

It’s the same as everything, some parents will do it and some wont.

The librarians have the same experience, the same group of academics promoting library skills every year, and some never.

Ye- it’s the same parents each year making an effort with the reading.

And the parents who don’t won’t take a book home and mind it.

Or they won’t bring them to the library anyway.

Ye.

So it’s another thing to deal with.

They need to be motivated somehow.

* Do you have support from a school librarian?
* Relationship with local public librarian?
* Is there any potential for collaboration here?
* Is anybody aware here of the Maynooth Outreach Project?

We have a library in school, we have a big room and the public library donated books to us and then we have a part time librarian who comes in. She’s not a qualified librarian as such, one of the parents comes in and runs it for us.

Does she? That’s really cool.

Ye.

I thought DEIS schools got a librarian, Are you not a DEIS school?

No.

After our evaluation this year, our inspector told us not to apply because we would actually loose teachers. This year we have managed to hold on to 4 EAL’s when hose places wouldn’t. if DEIS came in we’d lose them.

How does that make sense?

I don’t know, but he was saying to us, you could apply, but I would recommend for you not to, you would loose teachers whatever way they would shuffle it.
But you would get other stuff?

Ye

Teachers are important

Ye and what he recommended was not to apply for it

We only have class libraries, we don’t have a school library

Oh, like you have a shelf in the classroom?

Ye

That’s really good

We have that as well

There was a Meath Library service that used to call into us, but the funding for that went, they don’t do that anymore

I do know Educate Together have the mobile library come visit them once a week as well, so

In Maynooth College, their librarians went out to the 4th year students in the local secondary schools and did some IL sessions, mostly what they ended up discussing was social media and what they are saying on it, privacy issues and understanding that stuff is there forever, I don’t know if that’s something that comes up at primary level?

In the higher classes we do cyberbullying and stuff

The Guards come in and talk about it

The Guards? Is that not scary for the kids?

Is a programme they run, they come in for five or six sessions

It actually just gave some of them ideas and a few of them did the stuff that the Guards were telling them about

Did it actually? Like what?

There was something like rating girls or whatever, rating people on facebook, after the talk some of them went and...

Oh no!

I read a post on facebook yesterday- highlighting that things never disappear

That’s horrendous

Ye, they just have no idea
Parents don’t realise either, they think oh, if I just keep half an eye on them it will be fine, they don’t realise what can be going on in the 10 minutes you are not looking at them

Ye

And parents are posting embarrassing pictures of their kids

And they also don’t realise the potential, at all, for legal issues

Ye

They addressed that in the Maynooth Outreach- they asked the students do you think what you say on social media now should affect your job prospects when you are older, and they said no

Obviously it shouldn’t

They are just completely unaware

But people and employers do check facebook, that’s real life

But the schools are providing teaching on this

Ye, there is cyberbullying problems, but that has been brought into the SPHE curriculum for fifth and sixth, but not a huge amount of time. SPHE is 30 minutes a week and part of that you also have your RSE and other bits.

There isn’t enough for parents’ either

No

There should be programmes that they have to do, that the parents are forced to do. That RSE stuff where they can come in to if they want to

Ye, and that webwise programme is really good, that teaches them about that, they should have to do it

The librarian in Hibernia suggested that IL should be introduced to parents on support forums, perhaps this issue should be too. Places on the internet where parents go for support and information, maybe that would be a place to start infiltration, if you were going to

Ye, because it seems like it would kind of be a skills based, it could go into a skills box in the English curriculum discussion, something like that

With the ipads and other tablets children can use these devices before they can even talk, so then that means advertisers can reach them before any education does

Ye, they can work youtube, and the advertising around the edge of the screen

I put youtube videos on in the class and adds can come up right in the middle, for like a clear blue pregnancy test or something
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You can’t pre-watch them to filter them either because the adds are different every time you watch. I guess what you would have to do is download it and then play it, not stream it. We have a special version where some of the adds are blocked. Ye, but even so, some stuff does get through. Even an add for a scary movie or something.

I’m starting to think the reason why IL doesn’t get referred to is because you people have other things on your plate? As a skillset, it is so far down the list in so far as keeping them safe...

Ye but I think it is stuff they probably are doing, it is in the English curriculum on the skills, is probably similar, just under a different label.

If you didn’t know better, you would say some of the school curriculum outcomes were lifted from the IL frameworks.

But then how is there no Irish framework provided?

They are changing the English curriculum this year, English and Irish are together. They are together??

Ye, so it’s a language class, which is great in small classes but it’s just not going to work in big classes, you are not going to be able to teach the same level of English and Irish in fifth and sixth, it’s not possible.

It is always thought that the way Irish is taught is a weakness of the system.

The Buna Cainte is great for the little ones, my nephew has been doing it and knows the Irish for everything. It’s for junior and senior infants, first, second and third.

I think ours were using that last year but now they are changing the whole Irish course.

* Are any of the following ever incorporated into a class plan;

Information seeking

You do it in relation to

I get them to find their text books in the library.

We do comprehension and stuff, and in science.

Ye we would that with the older lot, doing projects, but then we are sending them to the internet, which they are abominably useless at! Whereby you give them an Ipad and say go research a topic, they don’t understand to take information out of something and reuse it. They only copy and paste. But that I think is to do with the information format, when we did it as kids, we were looking at a book and you had to physically rewrite it out and put it into your own words. Whereas kids these...
days can print everything off. I don’t think that they understand how to read a paragraph and look for the two points being made.

**What about critical assessment; like, is this true? Is this a reputable source?**

No, they go on the internet, and they always go to Wikipedia. And you try to tell them a million times, that’s not a real thing, but that’s always the first result in a search. Whenever you google something, Wikipedia is always top of the list, so then their whole project is Wikipedia then. I could just put a random fact in there that’s not true. They don’t understand what’s good information, what’s correct information and what’s not.

How do you teach that?

They think everything on the internet is true, like if it’s on the internet it’s the same as if it was a peer reviewed book.

Ask Google

Ye, so they don’t understand what is right and what’s wrong.

**The other thing is ethics; copyright and plagiarism?**

When you are on the internet you don’t even know your source half the time

I tried to get my kids to do that this year actually, because, they will have to do it for college, but it was very difficult to explain

But sure, even with the copy and paste they are plagiarising

They understood the concept of a bibliography, of writing down all the things they found, but they just don’t get the concept of treating each piece of information separately

They are going to find it so hard when they go to college and they have to do it

I remember myself, when you go to college after secondary school, you don’t do enough in secondary school. You get to college and you are shocked.

That’s what inspired the librarian outreach at Maynooth

I think that that is one of the most difficult things when you start college- how to actually write an academic paper.

You can put it into that new thing now, that checks for any plagiarism.

That programme is ridiculous; it tells you if you have plagiarised the word ‘the’

What is it called?

I can’t remember

Have you used it?
I don’t know, the college use it don’t they? I guess my class would be particularly good anyway.

Ye, you’d have an interest in that sort of thing anyway.

Now, in college it’s going to be very rare that you are going to come up with a fully original concept, so you would have to be careful.

What I find difficult to understand is self-plagiarism, I never realised you can plagiarise yourself

Ye, I didn’t know that either.

Ye, ethics, that would be too much for primary school. It’s a difficult concept if they can’t even understand they shouldn’t put a picture of themselves in a bikini on the internet! They are not going to understand the ethics of...

God, what age was that child?

Oh, we has dick-pic issues, in fifth class, not even sixth class.

Sent to a girl?

Yes, and then she sent back a picture of her boobs.

In a bra?

Ye, in a bra, thank God, it wasn’t my class, I don’t know all of the ins and outs but we had to call social services obviously.

Oh no.

But that’s what I mean, the kids didn’t understand. They didn’t get how bad that was.

Maybe we have done children a disservice.

You can desensitise them.

Giving them access to the internet, they can access adulthood.

Ye, they can.

But sure look at the way it is in France, they are not allowed put up pictures of anybody under eighteen onto the internet.

Are they not?

Kids find that concept really hard as well, when we were going on our school tour the kids were asking me if they could bring their phones for on the bus. And I said- you can bring your phones, but you can’t have the wifi on or send text messages, but if you want to listen to your music you can. And they don’t understand that they can’t just take pictures of anyone they want. They think- surely I can take pictures of my friends and put it on Facebook? That seems harmless but they don’t understand.
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Grown-ups don’t understand that either

No they don’t

I have that all the time, especially in the [GAA] club. They can’t take photos.

Because there are ten kids in the background and you’re going to put it on the internet

And people are disgusted because they think you are implying that they are going to use this photo for something. You’re not, but if they are going to put it up you don’t know who is going to get their hands on it. You just don’t know

But that has gone a bit too far the other way, you would have always taken photos your kids and their friends, but now you can’t? that’s not right either. Photos are memories and you are going to remember other people as well, not just your child by themselves, so that has gone too far the other direction. People are so afraid

But if they put those pictures on the internet

But sure that is where people keep them now, your photo album that you would have had at home in the press is now on facebook.

The internet has made people way more blasé about some things and more ridged about others

* To what extent do the curriculum outcomes influence your lesson plan?

You have to do your long term plan first, which curricula based, pretty much. You’re basically getting your programme that you are using, and your textbook and your curriculum and you are kind of matching up, seeing what exercises you can do.

You have to do two plans, September to Christmas and janurary to summer.

Ye, I do two as well

So you have long term goals and you have short term, every two weeks. A fortnightly report. And then you have to do a monthly ...

Account of what you did.

That’s to go into the school office.

They have to be kept, ready for inspection

How much work is there in that, for you to pick the lessons? Would you be using completely different material to somebody who had that class two years ago?

Well English, Irish and Maths you would have to cover the same stuff all the time, but like the SESE’s, the history, geography, science, are all two years, so fifth and sixth are together, fourth and third are together and it will be like- you have to do one ancient society, there will be ten of them and you will pick whichever one you want. So some people may never cover the Aztecs
But they are based on the text books you have- do you have SESE books?

Ye, we have one, we do base it around that. Now you don’t have to do everything in that book, and it doesn’t go home to parents so you wouldn’t be under the same pressure

I wouldn’t look at the curriculum as much as I should

I don’t look at it as much anymore, the first year or two you’re teaching you are, kind of like, looking at it the whole time but then

But even with regards to outcomes,

Ye, you just use what you have used already

So you might deviate a little bit?

Yes

You do until you’re having an evaluation and you are really focused on that year and kind of know it inside out

You would kind of move away from it- English especially, they are very, kind of, broad topics. Its not like do energy and forces in science,

There’s no harm in that, because the main aim in that level is that they are literate in English, so any practice you do is of benefit

I think with your long term plans you stick to the curriculum but with your short term plans you have to be a bit more practical, but then again your long term plan- I’m in sixth class for three years, I did my long term plan once at the start, three years ago and just used it again. So that means I’m only ever looking at my curriculum closely every three years. You probably should, in theory, have it out for every lesson you write, but that’s not possible really.

That might be often enough if the curriculum hasn’t changed?

But in theory, you should have your curriculum books out every single short term plan you do

There probably are stuff you miss out on

Ye

Because, you might be more in to reading or whatever, as opposed to writing or opposed to oral language, so probably

Ye, and some people are better at one

You can’t tick the boxes at everything

The gap I see, where it comes to IL is maybe among older teachers; maybe they’re digital skills aren’t as strong as their students, this might cause them to steer away from the information lesson because they are not confident using the device?
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I think probably some do steer away from the ICT, but that’s not a subject in itself, its meant to be integrated across everything. So there is a time you have to do it

We don’t have a computer room though, do you?

We have two sets of ipads

Is it bedlam when you take the ipads out

It depends, you have to have a really structured lesson, because if you just take them out and tell them because the easiest way to use them is to say here, use these to look up your information. But it can get a bit hectic, and there’ll always be one or two of them trying to get on youtube, or trying to get on something

Can you have that all set up and blocked?

Its set up and blocked as much as it can be, but they know how to turn safe search off, they just go into ipad menu and change the settings. They can get where they want to get, so you can select the apps they can use. And you can lock them, if you have a kid who is really acting up you can go into their ipad and lock them into one particular app and they can’t get out of it, that’s where he has to stay. But that’s a difficult thing to be doing, if you are watching 30 kids, and it would take you two or three minutes to lock one ipad, and then sure another one acts up. I hate using them, because I think you are using them for the sake of it we bought some ipads, better use them. And then you are trying to come up with a reason to use them. A better idea, I think, would be to have a computer bank in each classroom.

When I was in educate together, we had five computers at the back of every classroom, so then you could use them a bit more seamlessly than that

Where did you get funding for those?

We had a sponsor from IBM who would give us old computers, so we just built up a collection of them

Ye, I hate the ipads because, no matter how many times you tell them they have to be flat on the table they will hold them up and you can’t see what they are doing in the same way

Ye

*Are the curriculum outcomes measurable as per the outcomes in the IL frameworks?

Yes

Yes

Some more than others, English is hard to measure sometimes

The new ones are a bit more specific, did you see them

Ye, I did
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For the new curriculum we had, So they are measurable, but it’s just getting the time for 31 children And in the English there is so many of them, and they are all over the place. So they are measurable, but you can’t measure them? You could nearly do with a full time teacher, just measure your outcomes Assessment is so hard Ye It’s nearly impossible Well, its grand to tick off their work, but to actually do a, they want you to sit down and interview a kid. the way they see it, you sit down with a kid and read a passage with them and think it through, and see what they can do but that would take a long time and you can’t do it with all the kids And what do you do with all of the rest of them? Give them an ipad! What they want you to do with the new curriculum now, is pick three target kids; one weak kid, one middle kid, one high kid, to really properly assess. Then follow that kid the whole way through the school. Our problem with that is that what if your kid leaves? You have put all this work into assessing them and they are gone? We have a lot of movement with or school so from that point of view it seems as though its not going to work. You are supposed to have a base- so you would base all the high kids on the one high kid you assess, so you group them like that

So you would be teaching three different levels?

You would if you had three, last year I had about 12 different levels. They say you should have about three levels, the middle lot, then a few higher kids, and a few weaker

You are supposed to differentiate, ye

For every lesson

That’s the new curriculum

When I was in my last school that would have worked, because there was a large group that were fine, one or two that were really clever that you would give extra work and I’d say, two or three that would need a lot of help. Where I am now, my higher level kids are actually only what a normal school would have in the middle, but then at the lower level, I have a million different levels. I have a kid that came in this year, with no English, he had just come in from Thailand, he had no English in sixth class, so I couldn’t teach him anything. He needed a whole full time teacher, and then you have the normal kids
With the little ones, what I’d do is, I’d have them doing something, then I’d know the five or six who need help, and I’d go around to them. And then we are onto the next thing, start all over again, every ten minutes!

How many lessons do you do in a day?

Really, I should have extension stuff for the ones that get finished first, so they have something to be going on with

You’d have a few extra worksheets and puzzles, some people just throw another maths book page at them, but I try to have logical thinking stuff- I think that’s good, because that’s better for them, to push them a bit.

But it’s hard as well, you don’t want them to feel punished for getting their work done. Some kids who enjoy getting the extension work will still rush and do them but some will think, ah here, I’m not working hard just to get another worksheet.

It’s hard to find stuff that’s of high interest, but also of use to them.

And its time consuming as well-having stuff ready

You can just say- take out your library book there and have a read, draw a picture, where’s your desk copy? Do whatever you want in it- write a story, draw a picture.

* Do you see a use for the framework to be incorporated informally into your class activities?

Well I think at the older levels it would- I think you could prepare them a bit more for secondary school, that if a project was approached as skills rather than- just go and find what you can on that Egyptian lad there

Would it be easier if someone came in, from a local secondary school?

Ye, especially in the likes of sixth class, when you want to get them prepared

When there are other people coming in as well, they pay more attention

And it’s another thing for them to focus on then, instead of just another bit of work that you are giving them.

You could have a framework up on the wall to refer to

Ye, like you would do that with your maths and stuff quite often. You have your concepts and stuff on the board.

Ideally if you were to have a framework on the wall it would be age specific, like the Welsh one

* If IL were to be incorporated formally into the curriculum; where do you feel it would fit?

I think your English reading skills is where I would see it
But there has just been a change in that curriculum and it’s not there
Well that’s where I’d be thinking, with the comprehension and stuff, reading and extracting information
And in the SAC as well, science, history, geography, across all classes
But then again it comes into the SPHE as well, when we were saying about the internet and privacy and asking ‘is this true?’
It probably would be a separate subject as such
Or more a framework that you refer to the whole time I think

* _And how would you deliver it?_

In project work mostly
Across the board, because it is the concept that kids are finding out, the internet is the place they start. Not everything you put on the internet is true
There is an emphasis on lifelong learning with IL, I think a lot of the time you guys need to hit a target, need to get them to a certain level, so to be developing lifelong learners is not something that would be high on your agenda?
It’s something that you would really like to do but it’s not
Ye, there is lots of things like that that you would like to be doing in your perfect classroom you would do
I think it’s more of a home thing
Ye, the attitude towards it.
Like, the odd child you might affect, if you find something that a child is really interested in, and ten you push them towards doing that they might come along
If they are not being read with at home, you’re not going to have a big impact
And it goes both ways, if a teacher is not spending the time with a particular kid they might slip behind

** Is the term IL important if all of the skills are taught across the syllabus?**
I don’t know if it needs to be labelled
I do- but then maybe it gives it importance if you do label it
And if you have the poster in the class that you are referring to
I suppose if its labelled, it gives you the tools to set out the specifics to look for
It would be easier to identify
And its easier as a teacher, if you have something you can quickly refer to, that if they know the six words- like your evaluate, your scan for information. You could refer to it a lot easier as you are teaching
Like the WALTs and the WILTs
Oh yea
You put those up on the whiteboard and say- what are we learning to do?
One of the teachers in our school has one for the whole day, she has a WALT and a WILT pre-done for every lesson every morning, so when she has a science lesson she sticks a WALT and a WILT for the science lesson
On the white board?
Ye, on the whiteboard, she has dry white posters the posters are there and she just writes her aims on. So when you walk into her classroom you know exactly what they are doing. The inspector loved it.
Take a photo of that for me
And she had clouds on the back of the door with objectives for each subject that week, it was pretty impressive.
How many extra hours was she doing?
Em, not a lot, it was one of those things she was doing as she went along, when she was doing her plans so it was literally just a case of writing them down in the morning, wiping them off and writing tomorrow’s ones on. But she has them pre-ready, but you could just write them down.
Get me a piece of paper, I want her to draw this for me
It’s just two posters, one is WALT and one is WILT
And she does them for every lesson, and say she was on second class it might be capital letters and full stops, she would have the focus for the week on the posters, and then the aims for the subjects on the clouds, history might have Egyptians, something for English, edit our work correctly.
Very impressive
She didn’t realise it was that good a thing because she’d always done it, it didn’t dawn on her
Did she think everyone did it?
She probably thought she was making her life easier?
Making the rest of us look bad!
And I’m just trying to keep mine in their seats!

That’s the problem right there - the social aspects of being a primary school teacher.

It depends what school you are in.

Then in secondary, you only have them for one lesson and they are gone.

* Do you think that the Dept of Education is aware if IL as a transferable skillset in its own right?

Em, I don’t know, I think they would refer to it if they think it is an integrated skillset.

Did you look that up, whether the department of education have anything on it?

I did do a very simple search in a lot of their publications, the phrase is never mentioned, literacy is and information is, but never IL.

Ye, I’ve never heard of it as an actual phrase until now.

It makes sense when you hear what it is.

And how long have other countries been using the phrase? And why aren’t we using it?

That is my next question for you - why do you think there is no mention of it, when there is a European group on IL, when Scotland and Wales have a national framework?

I don’t even know who writes the curricula, is it a committee...

I don’t know who starts it.

Like a group.

Does it say at the start of the new language book?

I’m sure it does but I didn’t see it.

I think that maybe the reason it hasn’t gone mainstream is the lack of a definition.

But why didn’t they make an Irish framework?

Yes, because it seems like quite an obvious thing to do.

I wonder if they consider whether information literacy is just literacy, and they don’t differentiate it as a separate skill? Surely if you are literate, you’re ...

They do use digital literacy though, which is different to information literate.

I would say it has probably been absorbed into literacy in itself maybe, with all of the comprehension stuff you are going through information literacy but with a very strong emphasis on literacy itself.

Especially at primary level.
Have they missed a beat?

I think that people assumes that literacy means that you understand everything you read, but that’s not the case at all, and you have to have that basic understanding before you critically assess

The focus has been on reading intention as opposed to...

Ye, just getting them to read

Kids are coming in now too, with different languages and there isn’t reading material for them. Say for example, that one who came to my class from Thailand, it would make more sense for him to have something to read in his own language, instead of not reading anything at all. That he can still read, even if he is not reading in English. But then how many different language books would you need in your classroom then?

Could you get him online resources?

No

You wouldn’t be able to assess the quality of those; you wouldn’t know what you were giving him!

You would need some standard and approved resources

That’s what they do say about the EAL’s, that even if they don’t have the English you should encourage them, obviously you want them to be writing in English, but they are going to go through a phase where they can’t, and they go through the silent phase at first when they are overwhelmed. When they don’t know what’s going on, you should encourage them to do what they can, in their own language. Or just write in their own language. Now when it comes to the assessment of that written work I can’t do that accurately

How do you assess what they are doing?

They could be writing anything, but rather than sitting there doing nothing

At least they would be working on their motor skills, and participating in a small way

It is difficult though, when they have different levels coming in

They do eventually pick up English

It’s far more difficult when they are not speaking it at home

Especially over holidays, they come back after mid-term and it’s gone

It’s like what it was like for us doing Irish in school

Ye, the only way to learn it is to go to the Gaeltacht and get thrown into it, you pick up loads when you are immersed in it
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I had a polish lad in my class, and suddenly, after a while, he really started to come on, and I thought I was an amazing teacher, but then it turned out he was being minded in the afternoons by an Irish family, and he was playing with an English speaking boy all afternoon!

If they have parents who speak different languages it works really well, one lady in school, her children all speak fluent French and English.

* Does the group feel that if the skillset was taught in a core module that it may ease the pressure in some aspects of teaching?

Or you think it should be incorporated into aspects of teaching?

You could discuss it in its own right, as a module too

Maybe that would be more relevant in primary school, because we have them all day for every class, so you could have a theme, and be pointing out the information skills as they are used through the day

It might not be so seamless for secondary school

If you had somebody coming in, it would be great, but the kids need reiteration to remember things

Ye, they do

You could be doing searching for the whole of September, with your writing genres, that’s how we do it, say all of September is for persuasive writing, so you could do it that way as well, that they could learn a skill and then work on it

Is that a school thing or do you just do it?

No that’s a school thing, so all of the school are working on the same genre at the same time

Oh, the whole school is doing it?

Ye, we have an English, Irish maths plan for the whole school that is already done, that they did with their Croke Park hours, before I started, so I don’t have to do those long term plans because they are already done. At that stage it was planned what genres would be done when.

We are going to get better this year; we don’t have any all school plans.

Well we are having to redo ours because the English has changed and we are getting new maths books, the ones we were using were crap. And one of our teachers won a whole new set of Irish books for the school, so that plan will change as well.

And did you critically assess them??

Ha, yes, they were very good because they were free! We did look at them to see if they were suitable, and we were looking at changing the lessons a bit anyway. This was the only opportunity we had to upgrade, because she won a raffle at a publisher information day.

A lot of our classes don’t really have any books now
So then what structures those lessons then?

The teacher would, they would choose the resources. And there is a teacher book for each class.

They have to be very heavily resourced for that

Ye, and do a lot of photocopying

And loads of actual things; like in your maths, proper concrete resources, so rather than counting 1-10 on the board, here’s a basket of bears, count them.

That’s the way it’s supposed to be done

It’s not supposed to be done out of the books

In England, they don’t have any text books

But the teachers do a lot of report writing, the paperwork end of it is insane. But they do get an afternoon a week away from the kids to do the planning

But then you do have to be there until about eight o’clock to get all of your class reports done

It’s so hard, but I do think in school to have a good plan is important

And we do use our Croke Park hours to meet with our teaching team, so I get together with the other sixth class teacher and the learning support and we let each other know where we are at.

We just do some meetings; we don’t do any group planning.

There’s a lot of pressure on the principal as well to have a speaker in to do something with us. Often it’s like a lecture to the teaching staff, there’s rules around there having to be activities to include everyone

I think the time would be better spend doing planning

We had great meetings where we all just argued

There is too many people in one room

* **Do you think that strict adherence to the curriculum would allow the (average) student to achieve the following;**

* **Identification of an information need**

Ye, if you were strictly sticking to it, yes

* **Self directed learning**

That one probably depends on the teacher

And what resources they have, what’s there for them to find

But everything is there for them to find if they have the internet
Not all of mine would have access to the internet at home, they all have wifi on their phone, but not internet at home. The majority of them do, but when they are on their phones they are playing a game, not looking up a thing that came up in class,

I’d love if that was the influence I has on them!

It’s really more of a social thing or a life skill than a curriculum based skill

Ye, there are kids who will go and figure out a thing for themselves, and there are kids who won’t.

Ye, it’s just n some kids to be motivated and who have self-direction

And do you think the curriculum encourages critical assessment?

Of their own work or of other things?

Of resources they find

When I see assessment, I think have the kids done it right

No, I mean

Assessment of what you are reading

Exactly

Oh, we definitely don’t to that enough

No, I think the kids believe whatever we put in front of them is right and correct, if you give them a book, then that’s the right answer.

Teachers dot like being questioned as well, if you say something and the kids say- you are wrong miss, they would get- I am the teacher in this classroom!

But they do assume everything we give them is true, what we hand out is true, what is in the text books is true, what’s in library books is true ...

I’d say it would be interesting to give them some wring information to see what they make of it

So it would be right to say- there is no room in the curriculum to encourage critical assessment?

They would do true and false activities and things but not

But they don’t assess what you have given them

That is definitely a weakness of the system, but on the other hand there isn’t time in the day to discuss the credibility of every exercise you do with them

I found, that when I was in educate together, in the higher level classes there was too much questioning, they thought they could question everything, to the extent to where you would tell them to be quiet in class and they would say – I have a right to speak. I have a right to free speech,
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and I would say well you do, but with that right comes responsibilities. So I guess you could teach it that way, you have a right to question information but also responsibility to give your teacher respect.

You could get them to write down their questions and address them at the end of the lesson as a wy to curtail the lesson being delayed

So there is a way you could teach critical assessment?

Ye, definitely there is a way

When I asked the librarians what they thought the IL levels of teacher graduates are, the librarian In Hibernia said articulating a skill is something that comes easily to some but not to others

It’s a patience thing, sometimes you do something every single day for two weeks and they still don’t get it

Maths is sometimes very hard, tens and units is very hard, long division takes a long time

And especially for the ones who don’t have the support at home, and I find it very difficult to give out to a good child who doesn’t have their homework done one day, when some kids haven’t done it all week. I just stopped chasing it up this year, I would happily never give homework

Well, it is good for the middle child who is being supported at home

Ye

But for the remedial child who is going to sit there for two hours and just get frustrated

For the strong kid it’s pointless, for the weak kid its torture but for the middle kid it may just cement what you have been doing during the day.

Ye, it is practice

But for my class, I feel that I can’t insist on homework from some when I never get it from others, it’s just not fair.

What about optional homework

Then I’m wasting part of the day setting homework and going through yesterday’s homework with half of the class, while the other half are doing nothing. They should have readers at home, but not written homework for that setting

For maths it is important

Well maths is a practice subject, they do need practice

If it was optional that would be self-directed

Thank you very much for your participation ladies.
Appendix 14; Secondary Focus Group

Please click here to return to text

(PowerPoint Presentation)

* Prior to this introduction, were any of you familiar with the concept of IL?
* Heard the phrase?
* Know what it means?

I guessed what it meant, but I am not familiar with the term and before this didn’t really know what it was

I would not have used it as a phrase, but the idea of it, yes.

I hadn’t heard it

No

* Can anybody recall any library or IL training received in college?
* Was it useful?
* Emphasis on point of need or lifelong learning?

Ye, so it was like how to look up information, and how to reuse it once you have found it, that was it

Ye, learning how to reference

I wouldn’t have done any training, I was very busy studying and didn’t go to meet with the librarian. If there were any optional classes I didn’t show up for them!

That’s what the librarians indicated to me they are still doing- addressing a point of need.

Have you encountered any CPD courses based around information skills?

No, I haven’t. We would do a lot of in-house training, where a speaker is arranged and will come in to speak about a particular subject.

A lot of the CPD is voluntary, they ask do you want to do CPD, and the answer is no, we don’t!

They probably are there, but they are optional too. It’s probably one that you would skip over. We have never had anyone come in to speak to us about it.

* Have you encountered the phrase IL in your professional practise to date?

No no, I haven’t, not before today.

No, I don’t think so

No, I don’t think you would
Do you have support from a school librarian?

Relationship with local public librarian?

Is there any potential for collaboration here?

We have a small library, but it’s for, mostly first years use it. When they have a class free they will be allowed pick a book to read and things like that. Then some students, when they are in fourth year, they get more into it, like organising the library.

Oh they do it themselves? In our school the public librarian used to come into the first years and do a talk for us and encourage them to drop in to become members. So I think that sort of thing was beneficial. They haven’t been in in the last few years though.

Our local library is very supportive, the librarians come in to speak to the kids whenever we ask, and they do encourage membership too. I have never heard them speak about information literacy though.

In Maynooth College, their librarians went out to the 4th year students in the local secondary schools and did some IL sessions, mostly what they ended up discussing was social media and what they are saying on it and privacy issues. They were doing it in response to a need they perceived in the first year college students.

That is definitely a good idea, it is such a big jump for them when they go to college.

We are aware that there is a big difference between school and college but with the leaving cert course, we don’t have time to deviate from our schedule to address other skills, things outside of the subject.

Are any of the following ever incorporated into a class plan;

Information seeking

Yes- during project work

Well they do a huge amount of project work, especially in the younger classes. First to third year we would be doing a lot of project work. The junior cert is at least 20 to 30% project work. Ye, information seeking, they are often set a task where they have to do a little bit of research- go to the library and the internet, they have to be banned from using Wikipedia!

Any critical assessment? Do they ever read an article and assess the quality of the source, for example examining who wrote it?

Em, no I don’t think so. They do discuss articles in English class, things like style and content, but not really whether it is a trustworthy source.

They would have discussions in media studies and journalism studies in fourth year they would have an opportunity to assess documents in that way. Not in core modules so much though.

That would kind of go with evaluating the project you have done I suppose.
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**And ethics (copyright/ plagiarism)?**

No

No, not at all

Wouldn’t be hugely, but ye, say for history projects and things like that, they would teach them to reference properly. And to make sure information is accurate and not plagiarised.

* Do you have any awareness of information seeking behaviour in the delivery of your lessons?

During a lot of classes, they begin with take out your text book, so the information is provided. There is no need to go looking for it

But in the sciences they do encourage the kids to kind of, especially, again, the young ones, to go outside, and learn anything, from measuring to observation and things like that. In maths lass or science, they will take them out and bring them outside but those sort of activities is suggested in the curriculum. To make the subject real, in its delivery in the classroom. Instead of sitting in front of a book and letting them try to learn it themselves.

When they are younger there is more time for those things, when they are getting closer to leaving cert the pressure is on so there is less of the exploratory based lessons

Ye, the teachers are under pressure, almost just as much as the students are- to get courses done, often in sixth year, say in April, you will be skipping less important chapters in the book, saying OK, you don’t need that.

* To what extent do the curriculum outcomes influence your lesson plan?

From my experience, a lot of teachers, it depends how long they are in their job. So the younger teachers will stick to their lesson plan, and generally they do go to plan. They are very good at moving on to the next thing and staying on schedule. And if anybody is struggling they can come to them after class or whatever. Obviously, the teachers who are there longer and are doing it every year, they aren’t sticking to lesson plans, because they kind of know what they need to be doing. But at the same time, they would be the ones who run over time and say- oh god, we haven’t covered this yet, read this chapter at home yourself, and that sort of thing, which isn’t ideal.

I refer back to the curriculum when I do my plans, so not very often, I’m teaching the same course each year. I would be more directed by the past exam papers, what questions have been coming up, what topics are popular. I would only really look at the curriculum if I wanted to check a detail of my plan or if there was a change.

* Are the curriculum outcomes measurable as per the outcomes in the IL frameworks?

Well, your classes results speak for themselves

I think probably they are; I would say so.
Even if you are not setting regular assessments, you would know where a lot of them are, you know who is struggling, who is not struggling, who is top of the class. Who is able to retain the information given and who can’t.

I know that the primary school teachers are teaching a lot of different levels at once, in secondary they are streamed, so if a kid isn’t keeping up they will be dropped to a lower class. In the lower classes, though, there is a real mixed bag.

In the junior classes sometimes you would have a real mi, until the streaming is figured out, so that can be difficult.

You could also have a student who is really good at English, Irish and maths, but hates science, but is doing science. And that student might not be doing well in that subject, just because they don’t have the interest. There is less of that in exam years, where they have picked the subjects they want to do beyond the core subjects.

Because they pick what they are going to do

And then in the higher classes, for leaving cert, you either keep up or you are gone, so there wouldn’t be such a mix of levels there.

It’s not a very inclusive system

Well, it can be, the teachers would know the students that are struggling. I think teachers take it on themselves, to make sure they help those ones. Give a little more attention, to get more work to do, or less actually, than the others, who are doing well.

One of the girls I S&A’d for, she did, only say do five subjects out of seven going into her leaving cert. and the teachers knew she was slower at writing, so she would get less homework. Say for maths, if everybody had to do questions 1-10, she would do the odd or the even numbers. I would work that out with the teachers, from my assessment of her ability I would work with the teacher so that she got an appropriate amount of work to do. I would say, ok her mum is helping her at home, and when I would be doing work with her in a spare class, and I would know that it took her 20n minutes to do one question, where it was taking the others 5 or 10. So the homework would be designed that she would do all of the structure of it, just not as many repetitions. She still wasn’t getting it all covered, but I think that the teachers were very aware of that.

They do offer extra bits for different kids

* Do you see a use for the framework to be incorporated informally into your class activities?

Yes, because it would prepare them more for college life, it’s a huge jump from reading off a page to having to assess sources. Ideally there would be a curriculum change to incorporate the skills across all subjects.

Yea, definitely. Maybe more so in fourth year
Ye, in fourth year there is a lot more projects and things like that, activity based lessons. They could definitely do some information exercises that would be of benefit to their overall learning. They could definitely implement it then, and it is something they could continue on with in fifth and sixth. It would leave them slightly more prepared, for the jump to college

* If IL were to be incorporated formally into the curriculum; where do you feel it would fit?

Em in subjects wise or kind of...

Well, either within a subject? Or across the board?

Em, I would imagine anything that is, well, say maths, I don’t know if there would be room there. But definitely in any subject that is open to interpretation, say history, sciences, anything. Once they, well they are going to have to learn where this information comes from, you know.

I think it’s a huge part of being in school, and people do say that, you are fed information, and that’s a huge part of the leaving cert.

I think it should be in every single subject, because when you go into college, no matter what subject you are doing, you are going to go down that road. That is something I think people struggle with when they go into college. Maybe it wouldn’t really fit into maths, but the other subjects.

The whole question over the leaving cert is that it’s just a learning game. You don’t question where the information comes from,

Yes, the leaving cert has come up before as a weakness of the system, while I have been doing the project.

They are changing it, there are things that are coming in. but the students never have to question what the teachers are telling them. Or find things out for themselves, well they do in fourth year, to a certain extent. Teachers do sometimes take offence if a student is seen to be arguing with them. There are some teachers who think they are the one who knows everything, and they’re not. And for students, it can be important to get different opinions and perspectives. That’s how we make progress.

And how do you think it should be delivered?

I think that each subject should be built around the framework, because it gives that idea of starting to assess stuff, rather than taking everything for granted. But some teachers don’t really like that.

What you could do is, say we are looking at fourth year, you could bring the librarian in at the start of the year and then you’d follow up in CSPE class, and then maybe cement the information with a video, following a discussion on a topic maybe. I don’t know, maybe have another visit towards the end of the year with a different emphasis, after the topic has been introduced to the group. I know that that is a lot of man hours and things like that, but that would be the ideal.
There is a thing as well, that any visitor training, it has to be age-appropriate as well, s like the same talk can’t be delivered to say both second and sixth year, so they need to be given by people with sufficient expertise.

Especially when the people are not from the teaching profession. And you would have different social classes mixed up in any year group. You could have some kids from families with two working parent families, both well educated, and some kids who are not.

Some kids are supervised less than others too, when it comes to the internet, where others might have someone looking over their shoulder the whole time. To implement these skills across the board is hard, it is.

* Is the term IL important if all of the skills are taught across the syllabus?

Em, well, no, it’s hard to answer.

No, I don’t think it needs a label, I think it should just be second nature- this is how we learn

Well if you give it a name, it’s easier to work on it. And people do like to be graded on things. Well some people hate it, but mostly they love to be able to get marks.

* Do you think that the Dept of Education is aware if IL as a transferable skillset in its own right?

No, it’s not given enough importance

I would say they are aware of it, but I don’t know if they have the skill set to implement it, or if they have the time and the resources to implement it.

* Can anybody think of a reason as to why the term is not publicised by the Irish Government?

Resources maybe

I think it’s too much hassle to change the curriculum to add it in, that would be a massive job, it’s too much work, and they only ever change one or two subjects at a time, so it would take a generation to bring it in across the board

Do you think they are not mentioning it because the see it as, like, a trip to the library, and they are looking at- well everything is online now so… you know? So they think- we are not investing in that. But not everything is online and findable, and what college student doesn’t spend a ton of time in the library?

It’s a different issue now with the internet, it used to be a case of looking for information, now it’s a case of filtering lots of information, to find what you need

Information overload

Ye, being able to identify what’s crap and what’s not
* Does the group feel that if the skillset was taught in a core module that it may ease the pressure in some aspects of teaching?

I think that if you introduced the concept in first year, by the time they got to leaving cert they would already be doing it. And if it was reiterated. So say it was introduced in first year, and this is just part of your learning, this is how you learn. Then you would learn to question where the information has come from and everyone would be working together to find and assess, and then by the time you get to fourth year, you get you librarian in, reiterate all of those skills and teach from and outside person who says this is what you have been learning, this is what it is called. By the time they are in leaving cert, they are doing it.

Ye, I think that it could be done early on in secondary school, if you did it in first year in a particular class, as a transferable skill, it could then be applied to learning in all subjects. It could be done that way, but I do think you would need to do it at the start. And when they come in to secondary, they have had a big change, you could introduce the concept as- this is how we do it here in secondary, this is how we get our information and learn.

That’s very similar to what the librarian in Hibernia said

* Do you think that strict adherence to the curriculum would allow the (average) student to achieve the following;

* Identification of an information need

Yes, I do

Em, probably not, I don’t think so, they are just handed their books or we tell them what they need during class

* Self directed learning

A little bit during project work, but that stuff isn’t needed for their exams, it’s not going to help you pass your leaving cert. what you need is to have learned the information off by heart

This is really hard, so going back to primary school, starting in junior and senior infants, they don’t get this. So then by the time we see them in first year, the inclination to independently seek information is gone.

I found it with the girl I was S&A for, I would ask her to come up with an original idea for anything, and she wasn’t able to go and figure something out. And that wasn’t just her, everyone in her class was like that, you could see them looking at each other, thinking you want us to do that by ourselves??

It’s because they are fed information, instead of having to go and discover things themselves

They do seem to want to be fed it, you hear teachers complaining to their class- I’m spoon feeding you here. They are sometimes a bit lazy, maybe due to the system or maybe because they are teenagers!

* Critical assessment
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They do question things, definitely

But in class, when they are preparing for exams they don’t, they just concentrating on learning the stuff.

**Do you have any further comments?**

I just think that we could look to other countries for examples in how others approach life-long learning. In Nordic countries they stay in pre-school until they are, like, seven, for three hours a day, and they spend most of that time outdoors, and they say numbers, reading, all that stuff can come afterwards, there’s no rush on it. And they are learning, because they are counting- oh look we only have three sticks and there are four of us, and everybody needs a stick to dig in the sand, and what will we do?

But we are starting to lean towards that, now we have the new scheme

**Do you have any opinion on homework?**

Eh, it depends on the kid. Some of them love homework, because they want to show their parents what they are learning in school, and they find it very easy. But for them, there is probably no point to it because they absorb information easily. Other kids hate homework, they struggle with it and it can be quite frustrating, but it can be the difference in whether they fall behind in class or not.

To a certain extent in secondary school, homework is a chore, I do believe that. Especially the way the leaving cert is, it’s a learning game. You have to sit down and learn the stuff like. The teachers don’t get time to do it in school, junior cert probably more so, you get to learn say, your theorems and stuff, and you have done it so many times in class, by the time that you get through the course, even if you didn’t do your homework and if you didn’t learn it at home, you would still know it. But for the leaving cert you need to learn it. It’s tough.

So homework, say up to the age of 122, should be more of a show and tell at home, so that there is an interaction between home and school, it serves that purpose as well. And then parents know what their children are doing in school, I suppose in secondary school they do have to do it. But less of it?

The younger teachers were say, less aware of different socio-economic backgrounds, they had this idea of this is the ideal world that we live in. All of the students have the same chance to do their work. And it all goes back to my opinion that, I do believe teachers should go off and live in the world, and go to St Pats or go do their subjects in another college, and get their H.Dips or whatever, and then go off and work in the bank, work in the library, go work in the sciences for a couple of years, travel the world, and then come back to teaching. But not before they are 25. And just learn a little bit more about the world beyond the classroom.

When I was in Loreto, every year, the day before the students came back to school, we would have a staff day- a meeting in the morning and then after lunch we would have a speaker. One time we had a motivational speaker come in, I can’t remember exactly what he was talking about, it was

213
something like speaking and command a classroom, getting the respect of your students, without having to shout and roar. He was a very very confident guy, and he used to be a teacher himself. He said teachers make the worst students, they all think they know everything. They are always the ones making comments and talking to each other. The thing is, he said, that they have never left the student world, they have gone to college, and come straight back again. And they always do what they are told. So if he says to them, open up page 3, the teachers will be all racing to open up page 3, dying to open it first. Then they will all read through it. He said, they are always the ones with the least amount of questions, and they are always the ones who follow the instructions to the letter, when they are paying attention. He said other people would be more inclined to question him why are we doing this? What’s this for? What’s this about? And he’s done experiments where he persuaded teachers to do absolutely useless exercises, where it’s no benefit to anybody and they will all sit there and follow it to the last. They want to get their mark at the end. He said to them, if you can’t teach outside the box, how are you going to get your students to think outside the box?