



Report by Jérémie Fernandes, Librarian, Speyside High School

Lucky me! After getting my Postgraduate Diploma in June last year, I was one of the very first in my promotion to get a professional post: I was appointed as the school librarian at Speyside High in Aberlour, only four months after graduating.

However, working in schools was not what I had envisioned - I had prepared myself for a career in academic libraries instead. I quickly found out that I needed training in some areas specific to secondary education and among them, how to create and develop information literacy classes for high school students.

I found what sounded like the ideal course on the School Library Association website: **THERE IS A BETTER WAY / Information Literacy Skills to Empower**.

I was delighted to get the grant from CILIPS Development Fund and be able to attend the one-day course in London.

The trainer was Lin Smith, a former school librarian, SLA board member and CILIP mentor.

The first part of the course was called "What are we talking about?" and was an introduction on how to engage pupils when designing information literacy classes. It was really interesting to see how

pupils respond to different types of materials, and how choosing the right resource might determine the success or the failure of your class. Lin also emphasised the need to make the teachers aware that information literacy is a crucial skill across the whole curriculum, and try to get their input on the lessons.

The second part "Getting the best out of your raw material", again focused on the choice of the right materials, the importance of teaching efficient note-taking (Cornell method) to maximise retention and emphasised the fact that each pupil has their own way of learning and that one specific resource might not be engaging for every student. We were reminded of the importance of matching pupils with the right reading materials, in order to maximise retention. Whilst interesting in itself, I found that this part was a bit of digression from the main objective of the course.

The third part entitled "What shall we tell the children?" dealt with citation and copyright and website evaluation. This probably was the most interesting part of the course: we were shown a vast array of resources to teach students, from S1 to S6, how to identify what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to correctly cite and reference their work. The emphasis was also put on the different sources that pupils can use to conduct their research, the numerous search engines out there and how to use them.

Finally, the last part "Ways and means", focused on the constant need to document library skills sessions, demonstrate the work of the library to the senior leader team and engage the library in the whole curriculum. This is all the more important now that a lot of school librarian jobs are being cut.

As a whole, despite some interesting parts, I was slightly underwhelmed by the course, which I had hoped would be more practical. I felt that the emphasis should have been on facts rather than theory. It was a good experience overall, but I felt like I already knew a lot of the content of the course, and in this respect, it was not as useful as I had expected.