

**Core Interests of School Library Practitioner  
in Asia and Pacific Region  
SLAP (School Library Initiatives for Asia & Pacific) Forum 2013 Report**

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**Abstract**

*Internationally, there are well-known school library models including the U.S. model, with its strong groups of professionals, the British model, dependent on school library services in the community, and the Australian model, which can be described as either a successor to or a middle way between these two models. However, no independent school library model has been established in Asia. In Japan, the Library and Information Professions and Educations Renewal (LIPER) project was established in 2003 to study reforms to and the reorganization of library and information science education, with the members of the Japan Society of Library and Information Science. The School Library Initiatives for Asia & Pacific (SLAP) Forum, an international meeting for school library practitioners,*

*was held in Tokyo in January 2013, and even before then an initiative was conducted as part of the studies spun off from the LIPER's third stage. This paper reports on these topics.*

**Keywords:** SLAP, school library, international studies, practitioner, training

## **1. Introduction**

The Library and Information Professions and Education Renewal (LIPER) Project, a joint research project made up of members of the Japan Society of Library and Information Science. The project was modeled on the Kellogg-ALISE Information Professionals and Education Reform Project (KALIPER) announced in 2000 in the U.S., which surveyed the state of the shift of librarian training toward information science. Review of librarian training also took place in Britain in 2002, and it is clear that this is a response to the issues of professional training in the information society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

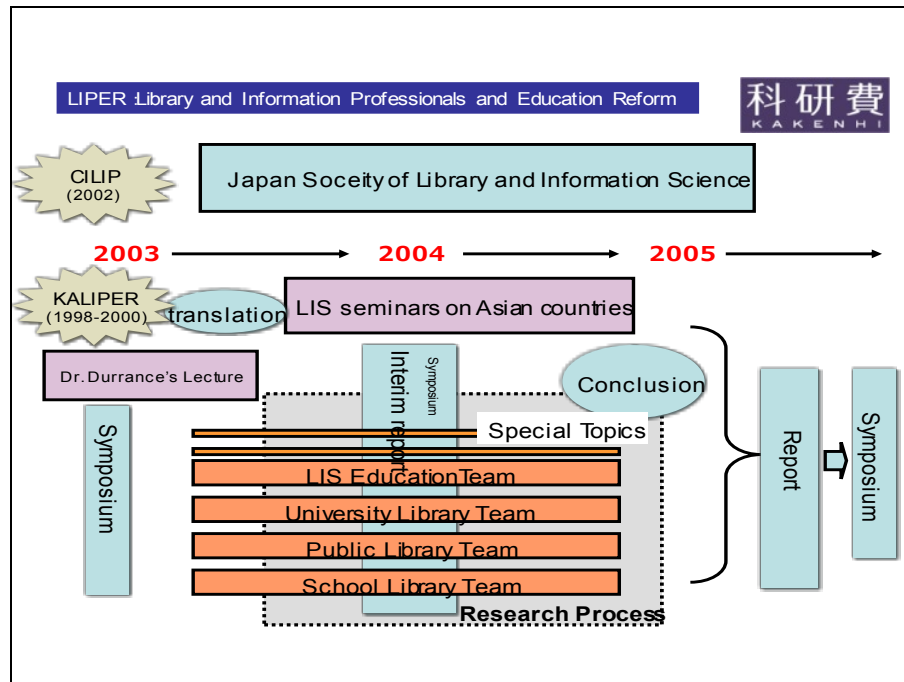


Figure 1: The LIPER Research Framework (from *LIPER Report*, 2006)

\*Original chart is in Japanese

The intent of establishing LIPER was “to carry out demonstrative research on issues in librarian training and education, which has not made much progress despite the identification of numerous ideas for improvement over many years, and provide recommendations for its restructuring” in Japanese libraries (LIPER Report, 2006).

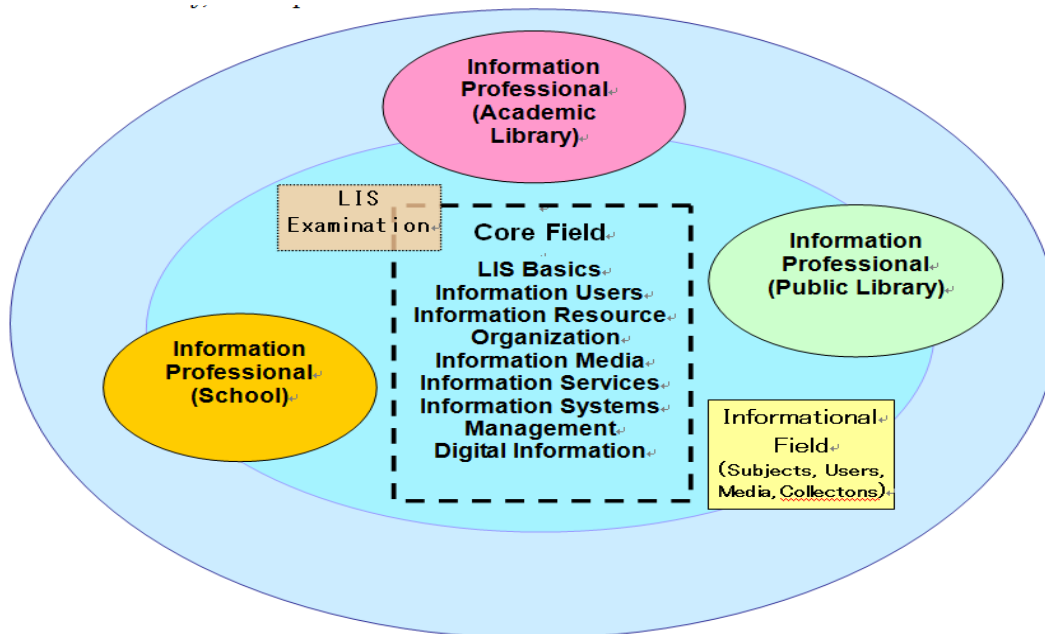


Figure 2: Library and Information Science Curriculum Structure (from *LIPER Report*, 2006)

\*Original chart is in Japanese

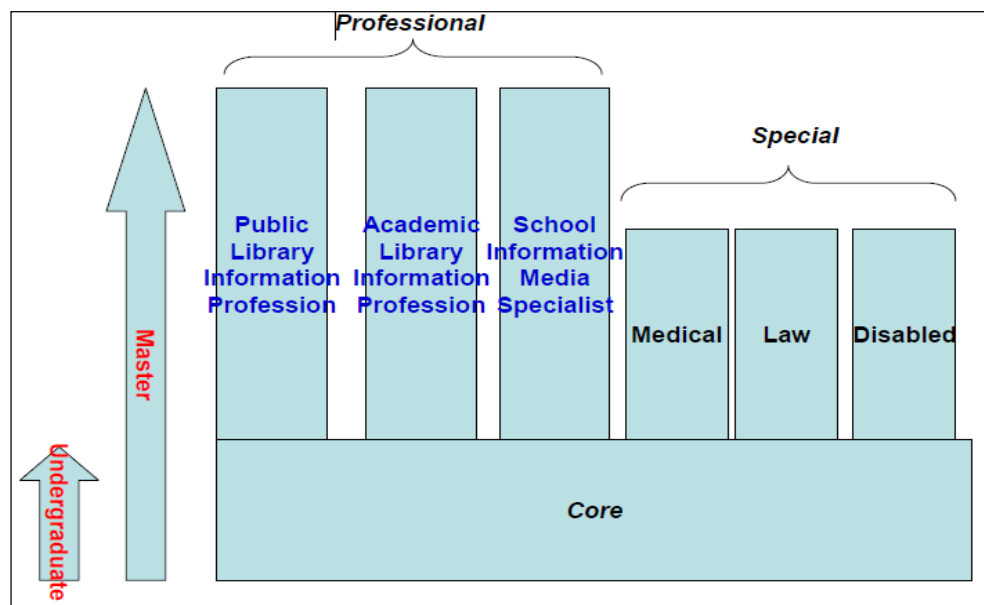


Figure 3: Courses in the Library and Information Science Curriculum (from *LIPER Report*, 2006)

\*original chart is in Japanese

Referring to library professionals using the term “information professionals” which in recent years has been used internationally to “denote the profession of librarians in an advanced information society” (LIPER, 2006), these recommendations identify a curriculum structure and course system for training such professionals (Figs. 2 and 3).

## 2. The GlobalIS Project

Later, under the succeeding LIPER2 research project, an “International Team” was organized to study “international mutual recognition and accreditation of credits in the information professionals training curriculum” as part of “reorganization of library and information science education aiming to train information professionals”. And the research was conducted with a focus on “the labor market for library and information science (LIS) professionals in the Asia-Pacific region and international trends toward quality assurance in LIS professional education” (LIPER2 Report, 2010).

Furthermore, the studies of the International Team achieved independent status as a research project subject to the national “Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Kakenhi)”, and they were taken over by the Global Library and Information Science (GlobalIS) Project led by research representative Professor Makiko Miwa of the Open University of Japan. The GlobalIS Project began in 2010 with the following research agenda:

1. Assessment of equality between the LIPER curriculum (LIPER Report, 2006) in Japan and world library and information-science curricula
2. Publishing books on international comparative studies concerning library and information-science education
3. Holding workshops for school library practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region

In studying library and information science educational programs in Europe, Miwa (2012) confirmed that the following subject areas constitute the mainstream in the library and information science education of today (Table 1).

Table 1: Subject Areas Included in the Educational Programs of European Library and Information Professional Training Institutions (Excerpted by Miwa, 2012)

Subject Areas
Mediation of culture in a special European context
The library in the multi-cultural information society: International and intercultural communication
Cultural heritage and digitalization of the cultural heritage
Library and society in a historical perspective
The information society: Barriers to the free access to information
Information literacy and learning

Knowledge organization
Knowledge management
Library management and promotion
Information seeking and Information retrieval

*Original Source: European Curriculum Reflections on Library and Information Science Education  
 Edited by Leif Kajberg and Leif Lørring, 2005*

### **3. The SLAP Project**

Following the somewhat lengthy introduction presented above, in this section we will describe how the SLAP project and its forum were planned and designed over many years through a series of studies on revisions to library and information profession and education.

Put simply, there are two conceivable points at issue regarding school libraries. The first concerns who should be responsible for management and maintenance of school libraries, and the second is whether professionals in school libraries should be library professionals or education professionals. The situations regarding these points differ even in developed countries such as the U.S., Britain, and Australia, and are strongly influenced by the circumstances and historical background of each country. However, these are propositions that cannot be avoided if we are to make any progress in designing a new Asian school library model. Incidentally, the LIPER1 recommendations used the term “information professionals (school)” instead of “information professional for school library” as used with other types of libraries, to reflect the fact that in the Japanese legal system until now librarians have not necessarily been central in staffing assignments. Under today’s Japan’s School Library Law, only “teacher librarian – sisho kyoyu” who has certified teacher librarian license with teacher’s license is provided and no provision exists for school librarian (gakko sisho). We must wait for future debate to choose who should be professionals for school libraries in Japan and other Asian countries.

The SLAP Project, charged with putting the finishing touches on the GlobalIS Project, began with seeking out areas of shared interest among practitioners and selecting themes for research and instruction, based on the studies conducted in each of the LIPER and GlobalIS projects and taking into consideration the current conditions of school libraries in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **4. Content of the SLAP Forum**

#### ***Identifying themes***

The LIPER1 report (LIPER Report, 2006) identified the following eight core areas for information professionals in all library types:

- Library and information science fundamentals
- Information users
- Organization of information resources
- Information media
- Information services

Information systems  
Management  
Digital information

Among these, the area of “information users” is likely to be deeply related to the school library field as well.

Furthermore, aside from the above core areas common to all library types, the LIPER recommendations also identified the following specialized areas as specialized subjects for “information professionals (school).”

School education  
Learning information media  
Learning environmental design  
Instruction/learning support  
Children’s reading

From these areas, the SLAP Forum workshops, to be conducted as training for school library practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region, ultimately chose the following three themes: (i) School library and inquiry learning, (ii) School library history and administration, and (iii) School library and curriculum.

The next sections will report on each theme discussed in the SLAP Forum, held January 12, 2013 at Fukutake Hall of the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, the University of Tokyo, with 30 participants.

### ***Workshop 1: Guided Inquiry***

From the 1990s through the 2000s, the biggest proposition in school libraries, chiefly in the U.S. and the rest of the English-speaking countries, was information literacy. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations have focused on not just surviving in an information society but also the image of the ideal human being, possessing the motivation and attitude to continue lifelong learning. At the same time, this can be described as the conclusion derived from the findings of research on humans’ information behavior, which until then had been considered straightforwardly. These findings argue that appropriate support and recollection in accordance with each process of handling information are effective, particularly for children and youths, and such education should be embedded into the context of school education.

The Information Search Process (ISP) Model, derived by Carol C. Kuhlthau from analysis of the information behavior of students learning at a school library media center beginning in the 1980s, has provided the theoretical grounding for development of information literacy education worldwide since the 1990s. In recent years Kuhlthau has advocated an inquiry-learning approach, which she calls Guided Inquiry, based on her own ISP Model. Dr. Leslie Maniotes, a co-author of the recent work *Guided Inquiry Design* (2012), which examines specific course design for Guided Inquiry, served as the instructor in this workshop.

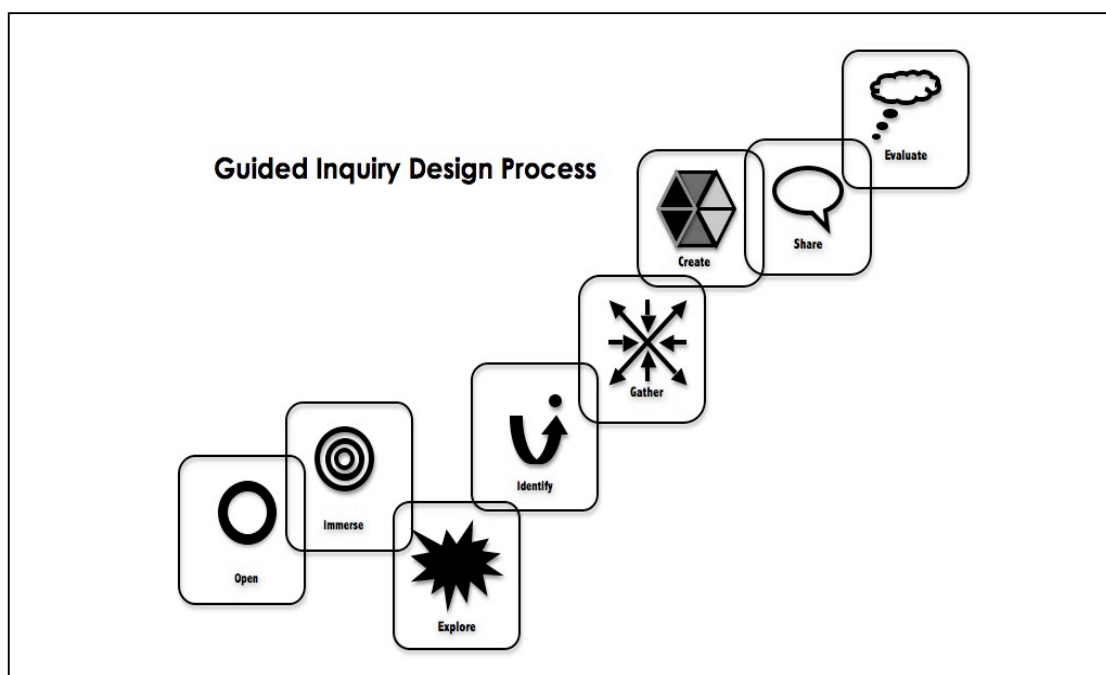


Figure 4: The Guided Inquiry Process  
(Kuhlthau, C., Maniotes, L., Caspari, A. *Guided Inquiry*, 2007)



While Kuhlthau's ISP Model involved analysis from the perspective of the learners who use information, Guided Inquiry focuses on the perspectives of the people providing intervening support and guidance. The design of Guided Inquiry consists of the following eight steps:

Open  
Immerse  
Explore  
Identify  
Gather  
Create  
Share  
Evaluate

It is a learning approach that provides students with the time and guidance they need to set up their own research themes.

The workshop included a poster session by Ms. Yoko Noborimoto of the department of information and communication technology (ICT) education at Tamagawa K-12 Academy, who took part in a Guided Inquiry workshop held at Rutgers in June, 2012. This session featured lively questions and debate on policies for putting the Guided Inquiry concept to use in actual class preparations. The workshop also welcomed the unexpected participation of Kuhlthau herself, who had come to Japan to serve as keynote speaker at an international symposium on children's reading to be held the following day, and this session proved to be full of enthusiasm.

### ***Workshop 2: History and administration of school libraries***

The modern school library movement was established in America when School Libraries Section of the American Library Association (ALA) held its first meeting in 1915 (Pond, 1976, p. 12). In England the School Library Association (SLA) representing the interests of school librarians was founded in 1937 (Colebourn, 1986, p. 8). The School Libraries Section of the Library Association (LA) was founded the same year (Cubbage, 2001, p. 59). However, school librarianship in the racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse countries in Asia were introduced and developed after the Second World War and post-war reconstruction period of the 1950s and beyond. Therefore models of school library development in Asian countries have not developed fully when compared to the United States or England. In fact there is no known outstanding or well known Asian model of school library development for researchers to study and understand.

The inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Library & Information Education & Practice (A-LIEP) conference that was held in Singapore in 2006 initiated the debate about an international certification system for library and information professional academic programs among participants in the region. The University of Tsukuba, Japan, hosted the biannual conference in 2009 followed by University Technology MARA, Malaysia, in 2011. Dr. Lim Peng Han presented two papers at the latter conference highlighting the importance of manpower planning and the formulation and implementation of mandatory school library standards in Singapore. He was requested to prepare and lead a workshop about the history and administration school library.

Dr. Lim began his workshop by showing the disparity and widening income and information gaps between the developing countries and Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) in Asia. He then referred to factors that determined Knuth's (2002) British and American international models of school library development as shown in Table 2. With data related to factors of school library development from two Southeast Asian countries, Singapore and Malaysia, and two East Asian countries, Hong Kong and Korea as shown in Table 3, he explained why, like Japan, the foundations of school library development are weak. As mentioned earlier,

modern school librarianship was introduced to these countries after the 1950s. There is either an absence of school library association or an ineffective school library association to formulate and implement mandatory school library standards. Except for Hong Kong, only part-time or temporary teacher librarians were employed in the other Asian countries. The outsourcing of basic school library services in Singapore is inadequate. Furthermore, the other Asian countries have either limited provision for school library services or none at all.

This workshop's audience consisted of school library administrators and researchers from Japan and international panellists like Dr. Cheah Yin Mee, a reading literacy specialist in Singapore and Dr. Kwon Eun Kyung, Daegu University in South Korea who had come to Tokyo to speak in the international symposium on children's reading on the following day in the University of Tokyo. Present situation and issues of school library in each country were discussed with the participants from Singapore, Australia, South Korea and Japan.

The findings and discussions of the workshop suggests that school library development in staffing, school library leadership, standards and school library services are critically lacking. As a long term solution, the stakeholders, like the School Library Association and teacher librarians, for example, should advocate for strong support for school library development suitable for each country's social, political and cultural background and identities.

Table 2: Knuth's International Model of School Library Development

British model (can be applied to developing countries)	American model (US, Denmark, Canada and Australia)
1. Education system	
Textbook orientated education systems.	School libraries within resource-based education systems.
School libraries as book depositories.	
A cultural/recreational reading mission.	An educational mission. School libraries as media centres.
2. Staffing of school libraries	
Personnel with inadequate training and role conflict.	Staff with dual training.
3. Leadership role of School Library Association	
Undeveloped or split professional leadership	Strong professional leadership
4. School Library Services	
Links with public libraries	School libraries within districts
5. School library standards	
Underdeveloped professional literature and ineffective standards	Extensive literature and accepted standards
6. Financial and/or statutory government support	
Government support and national funding is inadequate or nonexistent.	Schools libraries received national or regional funding during the 1960s and 1970s.

Source: Knuth, 2002, pp. 265-267.

Table 2: Comparing State of School Library Development (selected countries)

	Singapore	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Korea
Population/per capita income	5.2 million US\$56,570.	29.0 million US\$14,771.	7.1 million US\$46,291.	49.2 million US\$ 28,982.
Founding of library association	1955	1955	1958	1945
Introduction to modern school librarianship	1955	1955	1963 (grant only).	1950s – 1960s.

School Library Association	1969-1980 (none presently).	Nil	HKTLA SLG, HKPTA. *	NGO (1999).
School Library Standards	1972 and 1983 (none presently).	Nil	Education Dept. (Basic standards, 1998).	Master Plan (2003-2007)
School Library Services	Outsource	Nil	Education Dept., Library Section.	First Master Plan (2003-2007)
Ministry of Education	Began library development in 1977	Began during the 1960s	Began during the mid-1960s	First Master Plan (2003-2007)
Teacher Librarians	Part-time	Part-time	Full-time	Mostly temporary teacher librarians.
ICT infrastructure	IT Masterplan 1997-2002; 2003-2008; 2009-2014.	87 Smart schools (1999-2002) 22% of school libraries had automated system in 2002.	Yes	Edunet (2005).

*Note: \* Hong Kong Teacher Librarians Association; School Libraries Group, Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Association.*

### **Workshop 3: School libraries and curriculum**

As mentioned above concerning Workshop 1, in recent years the recognition has become established that learning activities in school libraries are more effective if they are conducted in ways embedded into existing courses. This draws attention to the position of the school library in the curriculum.

Australia's practical research on school libraries is regarded highly worldwide. The author recalls quite vividly hearing in an interview with an American university librarian around 2000, "Today, Australia conducts the best information literacy education."

Over numerous subsequent research visits to Australia, the author had the impression that the field of libraries in Australia is developing very soundly, and that the country was quite adeptly carrying out its own practical library management by adapting the earlier models of Britain and the U.S. to fit its own circumstances.

Administration in Australia is decentralized among the states, and the state of Victoria, home to Melbourne, which was Australia's largest city from the 19<sup>th</sup> into the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, occupied a central position in commerce, culture, and education for a long time. The region also played a central role in the development of libraries and the training of librarians as well.

For these reasons, Dr. Susan La Marca, who has been active for many years in the School Library Association of Victoria, and the editor of the journal *Synergy*, was chosen to lead this seminar, in light of the high regard in which Australia's curriculum is held internationally. The website of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority (ACARA) describes the Australian curriculum.

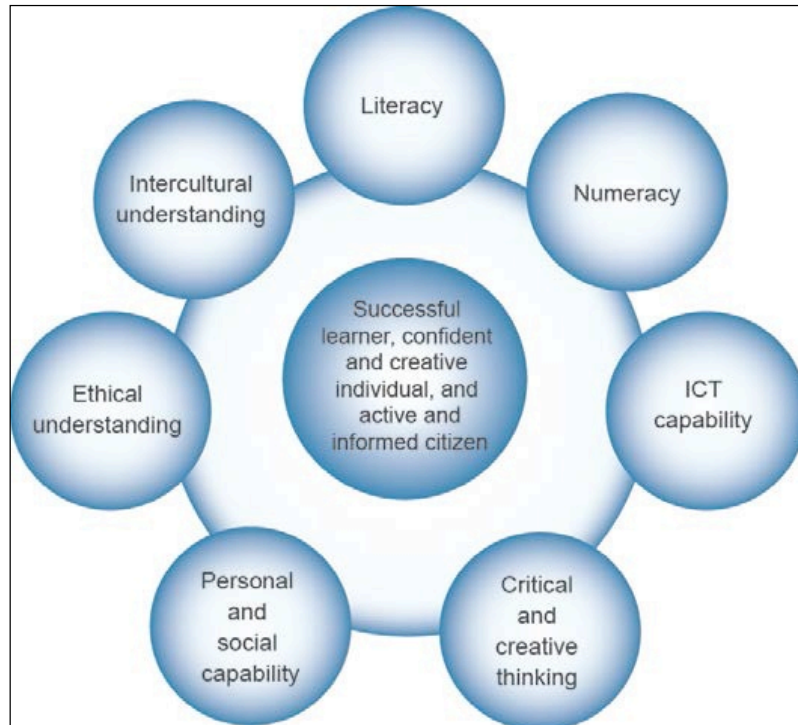


Figure 5: The Seven General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013)

While there remain differences between each state and they are yet to all fully embrace the new Australian Curriculum there is much similarity between states and all recognize the need to move towards an Australian wide system. In Australia, education from preschool+1 through 10<sup>th</sup> grade is managed together as F-10. Tenth graders are in the final year of secondary school, while 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, the equivalent of students in their second and third years of senior high school in Japan, make up the senior high school level.

The F-10 curriculum (the new Australian Curriculum) is divided into the four areas of English, mathematics, science, and history (with other subjects to be developed in coming years), while the following are identified as capability concepts that should be addressed in each course – literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding (Fig. 5). Each of these seven capability concepts, in the new Australian Curriculum, is to be incorporated into the various subject areas of study. In addition to these the following cross-curriculum priorities are identified as well, suited to Australia's own circumstances: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and sustainability.

Touching on the interaction between Australia's curriculum and school libraries, Dr. La Marca described its importance and relevance to their ongoing effort in school libraries to collaborate with subject teachers to ensure these capabilities are integrated. Areas such as ICT capabilities and critical and creative thinking hold scope for the involvement of school library programs promoting effective information literacy skills and research capabilities. It was also noted that the library through its co-curricular efforts and as a forum for community events can also play a role in extending and supporting the social capabilities through what it does as a community and cultural space and the collections and services it offers. Dr. La Marca also suggested that through school libraries diverse efforts to promote reading, in which she has been involved over many years, the seven general capabilities and in

particular, the cross curricular priorities can be addressed and enriched. This session was informative and proved highly stimulating to its participants.

## **5. Reflection of the SLAP Forum**

As an organizer and workshop facilitators of this forum, we review a number of issues.

First, we felt keenly that there still is a long way to go until a standardized school library model for Asia, the issue that SLAP has addressed from the start, will be developed. While recognition of the value of school libraries is increasing in recent years in Japanese society, at the same time staffing issues stand in the way as a crucial impediment to improved school libraries now and into the future. However, through this forum I also was able to recognize that this is an issue common to Asia. It is surmised that factors behind this include sociocultural issues such as the status and roles of experts in society as well as organizational systems and other factors. We should wait for future research to find a solution.

Another issue concerning management of the forum is the fact that there were so few participants from outside Japan. Although we received an inquiry from the Middle East at the application stage, in the end the individual did not participate in the forum. Looking at subjects such as the participants in past A-LIEP meetings, it cannot be denied that it is easier for participants from other Asian countries to attend when the meeting is held in Southeast Asia. Also, since participation from East Asia, particularly from China and South Korea, in international conferences in the library field has been low, there do not seem to be many advantages to holding the meeting in East Asia. It is conceivable that the high prices in Tokyo had a negative effect on participation. Despite this I suggest there is value in the SLAP model and suggest that it be replicated in other Asian countries and regions in the future to the benefit of all of those interested in library professions.

Currently we are preparing to upload a video recording of the SLAP Forum, which was held entirely in English, to a video website. We plan to link to the video from the SLAP website. I would encourage those who are interested to refer to the site for details.

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### Biographical note

**Yumiko Kasai**, Ph.D. (Interdisciplinary Information Studies, The University of Tokyo) had worked as information specialist for a private company, NGO in foreign affairs in Japan and The Embassy of Japan in Singapore. In 1996, she started working as “cybrarian” for a secondary school in Kyoto, Japan. In 2000, she started working for Tamagawa K-12 Academy and worked as a manager for learning support in a new built school library media center called “MMRC” from 2006 to 2009. Her research interests are on children’s information behaviour, information literacy, inquiry learning, reading literacy and all learning activities done in school library.

**Leslie K. Maniotes**, Ph.D., M.Ed., is an educational leader in the Denver Public Schools. A National Board Certified Teacher with eleven years of classroom experience, Maniotes has worked as a Teacher Effectiveness coach and a K–12 literacy specialist in rural and urban Title One schools. She received her doctorate in curriculum and instruction in the content areas from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and master's degree in reading from the University of North Carolina. Recent publication is: *Libraries Unlimited's Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century and Guided Inquiry Design: A Framework for Inquiry in Your School*.

**Dr. Lim Peng Han** has worked in the regional publishing and sports industries from 1980 to 1994. In 1984 he was awarded the "Order of Merit" by the Asian Football Confederation. He began working in academia and academic libraries since 1995. In 2008 he was a Research

Fellow at the National Library Board, Singapore. He has written journal articles and conference papers in the history of schooling and school libraries, comparative studies of schooling, publishing and school libraries, sports studies and Southeast Asian Studies. Dr. Lim is currently the Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Malaya's Sport Centre.

**Dr Susan La Marca** is a consultant in the areas of YA literature and school libraries, Head of Library at Genazzano FCJ College in Melbourne, the editor of Synergy, for SLAV and associate editor of Viewpoint: on books for young adults. Susan has presented both in the areas of reading culture and school library design and edited six texts in the field of teacher-librarianship including "Rethink: Ideas for Inspiring School Library Design" (SLAV, 2007) and wrote "Designing the Learning Environment" (ACER, 2010). Susan also co-edited "Things a Map Won't Show You: Stories from Australia and Beyond" (Penguin Books, 2012).