**Enabling Pupils to Learn by Finding Out for Themselves**

Always on the lookout for finding innovative ways in which the Library can be integral to teaching and learning at the College, I recently came across FOSIL (Framework of skills for Inquiry learning). This has been partially developed by the Head of Library and Archives at Oakham School in Rutland, and focusses on pupils finding out information for themselves, in response to a relevant subject inquiry which is embedded within a curriculum subject.

The idea behind the FOSIL framework is to steer pupils’ forwards (or back if necessary) through different stages of the inquiry process in the following way:

* **Connect**: Drawing on what you might already know in order to better understand what you do not yet know
* **Wonder**: Identifying those questions that will best guide your investigation
* **Investigate**: Knowing what scholarly resources are available and being able to use them effectively
* **Construct**: Building an accurate understanding based on factual evidence
* **Express**: Making the most compelling case given your evidence and audience
* **Reflect**: Evaluating how you have worked and what you have produced



Daryl Toerien Framework of Skills for Inquiry, Oakham School, Rutland.

The framework is similar to what is already expected of our Year 12 and 13 students undertaking Extended Projects. It makes sense to introduce these concepts earlier in order to lay the foundations so that it becomes an increasingly powerful tool for enabling inquiry, whether controlled, guided or open.

In collaboration with the History department, we decided to adapt FOSIL to supplement the work with Year 9 pupils on Sir Douglas Haig. Pupils were tasked with the challenge of investigating the premise of whether Haig was a butcher, bungler or competent commander during the First World War. They had several independent inquiry sessions in the Library, using a variety of specific books, journal articles, film and digital resources to support their work. Each pupil was guided to go through the FOSIL stages as part of their own learning journey. The work produced was then assessed and feedback provided to the pupils.

This term, in English two Y8 classes have started an inquiry based upon the world of science-fiction. The outcome will lead to pupils writing their own opening of a short science-fiction story, where the focus is on developing their literacy skills alongside their inquiry ones.

The impact of our first experience into the world of FOSIL is something that we are looking at this half term, initial feedback indicates that some found this idea of working enjoyable and challenging, while others unsurprisingly felt out of their comfort zone. As our pupils begin to become more familiar with FOSIL it is hoped that it is embedded as a natural part of their independent learning at the College.

**Celia Scott**

**College Librarian**

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