



Reference point 1: the impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities

- Policies for the improvement of library infrastructure and buildings ignore the issues of professional staff who are required to manage the building and the resources that it may hold or link to via the World Wide Web. The buildings, books, computers and other resources are of limited value without the appropriately trained personnel in sufficient numbers to make access and use possible and at maximum value.
- Those schools who have received new library buildings have not always obtained the type of building that would best suit their needs, nor have the staff who will work in them been involved in the consultation process.
- While a modern and well-equipped building will assist in the provision of library services, it is of little value without adequate personnel. This applies to the provision of technology without consulting the primary stakeholders.

Reference point 2: the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy

- Professional staff in school libraries must be led by Teacher Librarians. Teacher Librarians have a teaching qualification plus experience in the classroom. Generally this is acquired by postgraduate qualification that is an entry level into the profession of Information Science (Librarianship). This positions them to be of enormous assistance in improving standards in education for all students.
- Teacher-librarians are specifically trained and have a wide range of responsibilities which can be seen at <http://www.asla.org.au/schoollibraries/teacher-librarian.htm> . They work according to a set of professional standards which can be found at <http://www.asla.org.au/policy/standards.htm>
- Teacher-librarians do make a difference: <http://hubinfo.wordpress.com/froth/a-Teacher-librarian-changed-my-life/>
- Research irrefutably supports the value Teacher-librarians bring to academic programs and student learning. Further information relating to this can be found at <http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/links-schoollib.php>
- School libraries also require Library Officers (or School Officers) to provide the clerical and organisational support in processing materials ready for use and keeping them stored in an accessible manner. The provision of such personnel frees the Teacher-librarian to provide high level curriculum support for teachers and students. From overseas there are the following examples of the importance of Teacher-librarians and school libraries:

- The Amsterdam Statement: very brief but sums up the importance of this role as far as is seen by European teacher-librarians. See: <http://www.ensil-online.org/site/templates/ensil/images/pdf/Amsterdam%20Statement2003.pdf>
- Americans have set standards for student learning such as: http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/AASL_LearningStandards.pdf

- The importance of school libraries and qualified staff to operate them has increased with the advent of the Internet. This is supported at a global scale by people such as Jamie McKenzie. See: <http://fno.org/mar2010/still.html>
- The British opinion can be found in the manifesto downloadable from: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/manifesto/Pages/statutory-school-libraries.aspx>

Reference point 3: the factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians

- Throughout Australia there is a general shortage of teacher librarians (and other specialist teachers) which is becoming drastic in rural and regional areas.
- There is an increasing practice of schools using librarians rather than teacher librarians, or having staff with no library or teaching qualifications at all. In 1996 I was made redundant but offered a new job as a librarian (an unqualified role in the school system in which I was working). For a significant cut in salary and related conditions I was to continue doing what I had been doing. I chose to move to a teaching position in a nearby school.
- Teacher librarians being used in classrooms in some schools as subject teachers to fill gaps in staffing. Even in supportive schools such as my current place of employment there is a perception that you have to teach something outside the library in order to be credible.
- Ours is an ageing profession, with retirees not being replaced by sufficient numbers of graduates. Pre-service teachers are rarely being introduced to the role in any capacity within their teacher training.
- Teacher librarians keep gaining added responsibilities in terms of technology maintenance and student use of technology including loading paper in the photocopier and making sure plugs are in and switches on etc. These jobs require low skill levels and take up much time for little value adding to education.
- In the twenty-first century information is increasing exponentially, and, combined with the globalisation of economies, this means that the need for individuals to be able to locate and interpret what they need to function in our world is greater than ever before.
- Only three institutions currently prepare Teacher-librarians in recognised Graduate Diploma and Masters Level courses - Charles Stuart University, Edith Cowan University and Queensland University of Technology. Teachers who access these need to pay their own fees and do not receive any increase in salary or security of employment than their lesser qualified peers. Qualified librarians do not have access to adding a teaching perspective through further study.
- Many schools have libraries which are run by library technicians, and library officers or parents who are not qualified to provide the educational components. This is the case at my previous workplace.
- Teacher-librarians do make a difference: <http://hubinfo.wordpress.com/froth/a-Teacher-librarian-changed-my-life/>
- In British Colombia when positions of Teacher-librarians were under threat students responded as shown at <http://www.bccsl.ca/letters.htm> indicating that Teacher-

librarians are valued by their students in other places as well as here, when they are lucky enough to have one in their school.

- The Australian School Libraries Project contains a wide range of information about the state of school libraries within Australia:
<http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/portals/ASLRP/publications.php>
- Commercially minded administrators need to be aware of the value of qualified staff in their school libraries as it is a wise investment as stated in:
<http://www.forbes.com/2010/03/22/moran-librarian-skills-intelligent-investing-google.html>
- My current workplace has a Teacher-librarian who works full time but spends 1/6th of the time in a Year 12 History class, a .5 FTE Librarian who also has teaching qualifications who teaches Primary Library lessons and a qualified Primary Teacher who has chosen to work as a Library Assistant who works .6 FTE. We cover the services of two campuses: ELC-6 and 7-12 where the enrolment is growing. Our staffing has marginally increased over the last 5 years but is still well below optimal. We consider ourselves lucky by comparison to many other schools in our region.

Reference point 4: the role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians

- A contact person who works across the curriculum and has a detailed knowledge of information services and resources is required for the effective communication and establishment of links between various levels of government and other institutions when supporting school communities.
- Teacher Librarians:
 - operate within a highly pro-active professional community and respond to and create links with the public library sector (urban and rural), and provide information services for the school community, including teachers, administration and parents and citizens;
 - provide programs which assist students in the transition from primary to secondary school and secondary to tertiary studies; and
 - assist in the development of literacy programs for ESL students and their parents.
- Tertiary institutions preparing teachers for work in schools should be introducing the role of the Teacher-librarian to their students. Many have come through without access to such people themselves, and are not being told about the value of cooperative teaching and planning.

Reference point 5: the impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians

Technology is not a means in itself, rather it is a part of the overall educative process which can only be realised with effective integration into the curriculum. In schools lucky enough to have one, it is the Teacher Librarian who provides:

specialist knowledge, support and professional development training for staff in how to use and embed digital technologies into curriculum;
the management of technologies for equitable access;

the infrastructure and policy development required for acceptable and appropriate use of a wide range of digital resources and technologies, including cyberbullying, privacy, identity theft and security of information;
the educational rationale for the effective inclusion of digital technologies in the curriculum;
equal access to a range of digital resources and delivery formats which support the development of high quality literacy programs in schools.

All schools should have a range of properly qualified staff in their school library: teacher-librarians, clerical and technical support. There should be an Australia wide base level of staffing per number of students in schools. Such staff should be supernumerary. This would ensure that there would be a strong focus of learning and curriculum development in the school. It would also free such personnel from the need to advocate for their own positions in a way the classroom teachers never encounter and get on with the task of preparing effective twenty-first century citizens for our global community.

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful Australian online community of Teacher-librarians, and colleagues in our profession overseas, who have made ideas and information freely available to me in the development of my personal response to this submission.

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