



Inquiry into School libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

Submission:

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

Trained teacher librarians are essential to the effective use of school libraries by teachers and students, as well as parents who can feel confident in the knowledge that their children are receiving the best guidance and support to learn about and use information from many sources, in particular the new digital technologies.

Effectiveness refers to managing student learning and teaching pedagogy by the teacher librarian bringing together the right resources to meet their needs in a timely manner.

Effectiveness refers to cost effectiveness as proper management and use of all library resources as facilitated by the teacher librarian results in value for money use of the library and not thousands of dollars of resources gathering dust because they are not being utilised properly. In many cases this is because students and teachers don't know they exist or don't realise the potential of resources being brought together to improve teaching and learning.

Teachers need help. They need someone (teacher librarian) to search out the best resources, coordinate the different types of resources to bring them together in one place that teachers may easily access in a time efficient manner. While teachers can search for themselves they do not have time for extensive searches, consideration of different types of information and resources and may not know all the avenues to explore that the teacher librarian does. Teachers supported by this kind of service will bring better lessons, teaching strategies and resources to their lessons which will improve student learning and outcomes. Students supported by this service described for teachers above are likely to develop a more positive attitude to education and study because they feel there is support, guidance and more provision to meet their own needs as individuals ie learning styles, interests

Reference point 2: the future of potential school libraries:

Teacher librarians will be more important than ever with the rapidly growing area of digital resources particularly if education is to be equitable for all. For some students the school library may be their only opportunity to learn about new technologies and practise using them to help them learn, support their interests and work and learn more efficiently.

Likewise for teachers they will need help and support in keeping up with new technologies and their potential for teaching and learning especially as the face of teaching and school structures will change as the potential of technology for finding information and using this information effectively to meet needs increases.

Summation

School Libraries are special libraries like medical or music libraries or faculty libraries at Universities. They require specialist staff including teacher librarians and ancillary support staff who also have library training such as library technicians and library officers. School libraries require a teacher librarian someone who has both teaching and librarian qualifications that bring together knowledge of curriculum, teaching pedagogies, student learning styles and interests, and managing student behaviour with the knowledge of how information is organised and managed and the advanced search skills that library training brings.

Teacher librarians are specially placed to increase literacy standards by the support they give which can encourage students to increase their reading skills through bringing literature to students attention as well as the wide variety of information formats where they can feel that there is something to suit them, somewhere where they belong.

With the help of the teacher librarian, teachers can more readily promote reading by offering a wider range of texts covering varied interests that can capture the interest of more students.

As an ex primary school teacher and now qualified teacher librarian I can see how my teaching would have been greatly enhanced if I had the support of a school library with properly trained staff.

As a grandmother now I hope my grandchildren will go through their school years with a dynamic school library led by trained staff who will help them not only with their education but their future lives where they will be strong readers who will know how to find information and how to use it most effectively for their needs.

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