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The Future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improve educational and community outcomes, especially literacy.

Teacher – librarians have watered and nurtured many school libraries. Not as many are doing the watering and nurturing now, and like plants our libraries are dying.

Librarians and general library staff focus heavily on designing a library and providing resources which are full of valuable teaching and learning tools whilst still ensuring the resource is appealing to the students.

Librarians provide:

- support children to actively construct meaning from reading
 - encouragement - problem solving – ensure that children gain understanding and learning from resources provided by the library selected by the librarian
 - resources that cater for all learning styles
 - opportunities which allow and encourage children to learn at their own pace
 - resources which promote intrinsic motivation, which assists children in developing a passion for learning and hence reading - literacy skills
 - support and encourage dialogue among all participants, which is vital in all learning
 - play-based activities to foster an enjoyment for learning
 - all children of different abilities to experience success in literacy - ensure collection caters for all children at all reading levels
 - and promote positive attitudes to learning and improve self esteem
 - non-competitive and individualised learning experiences
 - assistance which will help improve student learning outcomes
 - opportunities which will encourage parents, teachers and other individuals involved in a child's educational development to interact with the students through library based activities and community involvement – for example Book Week, International Schools Library Day. Library Information Week
 - a bright, colourful, tactile and enjoyable experience whilst providing a safe harbour for those students who feel and need time out from the rest of the school community.
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- I have learnt in my teacher training that children become better readers (and spellers and writers) by reading. I have drawn on the expertise of Teacher librarians for they are specialists in encouraging literacy through free voluntary reading, a guaranteed way to help kids become more literate

 - From my teacher training research studies have shown that free voluntary reading is at least as effective as conventional teaching methods in helping children to do well on standardized tests. Reading for pleasure provides a great

deal that these tests don't measure. Study after study has confirmed that those who read more know more. Their vocabulary increases and grammar and spelling improves (Krashen).

- More access to reading results in more reading; this result applies to books in the home, classroom libraries, school libraries and public libraries (Krashen, 2004). In fact, sometimes a single, brief exposure to good reading material can result in a clear increase in enthusiasm for reading (Ramos and Krashen, 1998; Cho and Krashen, 2002). **Reference** Stephen Krashen Literacy Network News, Spring, 2007, page 7 (Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles) Retrieved April 7 2010 from [Shttp://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/literacy_campaigns/all.html](http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/literacy_campaigns/all.html)
- As an undergraduate teacher I have seen the importance of life-long learners, students need to be information literate. Teacher librarians specialize in teaching information literacy.

Information literacy includes critically reading print, graphics, video, and all learning objects to build knowledge. The information literate seek diverse viewpoints. Information literacy includes the ethical use of information and responsible use of social networking tools. The real problem: access to books (Krashen)

Teacher Librarians can supply these resources.

Perhaps the most serious problem with current literacy campaigns is that they ignore, and even divert attention from, the real problem: Lack of access to books for children (Krashen)

- Funding for research in Australia on the role of school libraries and teacher librarians in improving educational outcomes is needed.

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Factors influencing recruitment and development of school; librarians

- Teacher librarian training programs have decreased in number from 15 to 3-4 in the past two decades. We have no national data on teachers undergoing teacher librarian training.

- The recent trend toward devolved, flexible staffing along with dwindling school budgets has resulted in the increased use of teacher librarians in classrooms and the replacement of teacher librarians with less expensive staff.
- It is essential to have trained librarians for they can ensure:
 - That young students entering the university system are encouraged to enter the library profession.
 - Encouragement of these new librarians to work in school libraries.
 - improve and stimulate development of library service in the community

The impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities

- Many new BER libraries will have no qualified teacher librarian and no new books.
- The Digital Revolution has funded much needed IT, but too often to the detriment of the remainder of school library resource budgets.
- The impact of National Partnership Agreements on school library staffing (eg NSW devolved staffing trial)

The impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians

- Books will continue to exist in many formats, printed, e-books, CDROMs, etc. Quality information, for example through online databases, is not free. Teacher librarians, in collaboration with teachers, will still be needed to select, purchase, organize and guide access to books and information.
- Teacher librarians willingly update their skills in IT, develop library web access points, digitize data, network with colleagues, review and select online websites, learning objects, webquests, online databases, social networking tools, etc. This is part of their collection development role, their teaching and curriculum support role and their role in improving literacy.

The factors influencing recruitment and development of school librarians

- I have observed that Teacher librarian training programs have decreased in number from 15 to 3-4 in the past two decades. I have not seen any national data on teachers undergoing teacher librarian training. Access to Universities to do teacher Librarian training is difficult due to the few numbers of universities offering the courses.

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The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians

- Excellent educational planning relies on good data. We have no complete national workforce data on teacher librarian numbers and use. We have no government school data on school library budgets (only surveys such as ASLRP).
- Educational leaders need easy access to the research on the contribution of school libraries and teacher librarians to improved educational outcomes.
- Educational leaders need support in developing excellent school libraries and excellent teacher librarians (PD in use of Standards for Excellence, IL Standards, Library Standards).
- Quality teachers and pre-service teachers need easy access to the research on guided inquiry, information literacy, collaborative planning and teaching with teacher librarians.
- We have no current national government standards for school libraries to guide their development. Historically they did exist. (*Books and Beyond: Guidelines for library resource facilities and services*. Canberra: Schools Commission, 1977, 2nd ed. 1979)
- State DET support services virtually no longer exist in terms of consultancy services. Some curriculum support services remain. Professional associations have had to assume the majority of professional development, yet dependent on volunteers, this is dwindling. Newly appointed untrained school library staff are often dependent on local teacher librarian networks for their training.
- A big push was made in the 1970s to develop secondary school libraries. A similar push was never carried out fully for primary libraries.
- Common policies for school libraries and information literacy are needed across all states.