



Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools

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

I am writing this submission from the perspective of a beginning teacher, addressing the term of reference above. During my first two years of appointments in schools I did not have access to a Teacher Librarian. Having now talked to a number of experienced Teacher Librarians and after researching the role of the Teacher Librarian for this submission, my eyes have been opened as to the services they can provide to both staff and students within a school. I am now aware that having a qualified Teacher Librarian in the school library is an invaluable resource. While the libraries in the schools I was employed at had large collections of books, computers, technological equipment and various other resources, I felt I just didn't have the time or knowledge to utilise these resources effectively in my teaching. Without a Teacher Librarian, all these wonderful resources were of little value. I now know, however, that if a Teacher Librarian had been present they could have made a significant improvement to the quality of my literacy programs by:

- Collaborating with me to produce motivating, inquiry-based units of work that involved high levels of thinking and learning
- Assisting to create authentic, meaningful assessments for my units of work
- Providing professional development and personal instruction on how to use and integrate ICT and new technologies in teaching programs
- Providing ideas for setting up reading groups and recommending appropriate books based on the level of readers and topics being studied at the time
- Providing strategies to assist struggling readers improve their literacy skills
- Providing access to a range of quality resources (both print and digital) that support the curriculum, and teaching students to use these resources effectively
- Locating and evaluating age-appropriate, credible websites for students to use when researching topics
- Teaching students how to search the internet effectively and evaluate the quality and credibility of websites for themselves
- Invoking a love of reading and developing literacy skills by matching books to the interest and capabilities of readers

I am disappointed that I did not have access to a Teacher Librarian in my first years of teaching – the years when support as outlined above would have been extremely beneficial. Although I am currently working in a different government sector, when I return to teaching I strongly hope the school I gain employment at recognises the value of literacy and learning and has employed the services of a qualified Teacher Librarian to collaborate with me in programs to develop students' reading and information literacy skills.

Yours Sincerely,

Chenelle Davies

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