



I understand that submissions are invited from interested persons, both Australian and overseas, regarding views about school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools. I am not an Australian citizen, though last year I completed a PhD thesis with Charles Sturt University, NSW, about the impact of an international school library on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. I realize that the specific curriculum is mostly available in private schools (though not entirely so) in Australia, but is within the remit of the inquiry.

I would like to make one point, which my research – and others – identifies as key to future development and relevance of school libraries (in Australia and elsewhere).

The role of teachers in encouraging student use of the library and teachers (and administrators) being aware of the role, utility and potential of the library is crucial to the development of the school library. At the moment, this largely depends on the previous experience of a teacher, perhaps in another school which has a useful and good library, or even as a student her/himself, and is therefore ad hoc in nature. Teacher awareness does not come, generally speaking, from any teacher education programme. Teachers should be provided with strategies to develop pedagogical use of the library, and should be a responsibility for teaching education programmes. This is also true for any education specifically provided for principals or head teachers. At the moment, librarians need to market and educate their regular teaching colleagues, as well as the student population.

I attach an abstract of my thesis, prepared for publication in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Research in International Education*, which underlines the point I am making, and puts it into the context of my research.

**Factors affecting the impact of a library and information service
on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
in an international school: A constructivist grounded theory
approach.**

Anthony Tilke

Doctor of Philosophy thesis 2009

Charles Sturt University, Australia

The study of the impact of the school library in an international school on a particular curriculum for a cohort of students aged 16-18 years focussed on the role of the school librarian within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme [IBDP]. The IBDP is an expanding international pre-university course, for which students require high levels of learning skills, aptitudes and abilities. In the literature on this curriculum, the role of the school library in supporting students and faculty is largely anecdotal.

An international school is accepted to be typically a private school for various nationalities of students in the K-12 range, with the language of instruction being English, and teachers representing various nationalities.

The study was qualitative and used a constructivist model of grounded theory, to develop a theory for the particular situation. Techniques used included observation of students in a natural environment: a school library (which served a whole school (K-12) population). Several students were interviewed twice, once halfway through the two-year programme and at the end. Other students were interviewed to provide comparison. Teachers and administrators were also interviewed.

The study found that the main impact of an international school library/ian on the IBDP is focused on the provision and maintenance of a helpful atmosphere in an appropriate place to enable students to study effectively. Otherwise, a specific role exists with regard to the extended

essay, through provision of resources and librarian support with regard to skills of bibliography construction and in-text citation. These aspects were valued by the IBDP school community.

Constraints on the role of a library in support of the programme included the need for significant content transfer, limited time and limited pedagogical use of the library. This is due to teachers' limited previous experiences of library provision and use, non-inclusion of pedagogical use of a library in teacher education courses and lack of inclusion in IBDP subject documentation. A further tension identified by the study was that promotion of a library and information sector-advocated model of the school library may be unsuited to prevailing pedagogies and curriculum. Consequently, the role of a library/ian in support of IBDP may be unperceived by the IBDP school community, though student views about the library changed during their IBDP candidature, identifying some value for library support. The role of teachers was important, as their encouragement and expectations of student use of the school library was vital; teachers' use and perception of value of the school library was based on their own experiences of libraries, both in previous schools as teachers and as school students themselves.